Walsall & Willenhall
CHRONICLE
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Damning Ofsted report criticises high staff turnover

ACT NOW PLEA ON CHILD SERVICES

BY ALEX ROSS

THE NSPCC is urging Walsall Council to act swiftly after the authority's children's service was told to improve by education watchdogs.

The department was rated as 'requires improvement to be good' by Ofsted, which criticised the high caseloads and staff turnover referring to a 'constant churn'of managers.

It also claimed work to protect children at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation is not rigorous enough.

The report follows an inspection into services for children across the borough and a review of the effectiveness of the Walsall Safeguarding Children Board, both of which have been rated as 'requires improvement'.

A spokesman for children's charity the NSPCC said: "It is clear from this report that the circumstances surrounding some looked-after children need to be more comprehensively examined and more must be done to protect children at risk of sexual exploitation.

"It is vital that the local authority recognises the improvements that need to be made. Management must now act swiftly to implement this report's recommendations and better safeguard children who are depending on them."

Jenny Turnross, lead inspector with Ofsted, said: "Social workers and managers do not always sufficiently understand the impact of children living in situations of neglect, domestic abuse and parental drug misuse and, in a small number of cases, children have not received the necessary level of support.

"Work to protect children at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation, is not rigorous enough. Risk assessments are evident but vary in quality, and there is limited analysis.

"As a result, risks of sexual exploitation to some children, including children looked after, are not responded to effectively."

As of March 31, 2,521 children across the borough had been identified as being in need of a specialist children's service.

Features of good practice were also recognised, such as the priority given to improving children's services by senior leaders.

Councillor Aftab Nawaz, portfolio holder for children's services said the recommendations made by inspectors were all being addressed.

MOCK MOPS, ROCK AND FROCKS AT LOCK STOCK

The Lock Stock music event in Willenhall Park, Pinson Road, Willenhall. Christian West, Shaun Slater and Pippa Dhillon

MORE than 2,000 people came out to enjoy live music at an event designed to 'put Willenhall back on the map'.

The first ever Lock Stock at Willenhall Park was a huge success according to organisers, who say that the response from the community was so positive the show will return next year. After a year of planning, more than 20 bands and singers performed at the park on Sunday, including tributes to Led Zeppelin, Stevie Wonder and Elvis Presley, who performed alongside up and coming artists such as Jamie Leigh and Lisa Morrall.

Thousands of pounds was raised for charity on the day, which is still being counted and will be given to community groups from the town. Co-organiser Harry Constable, who put the event together with colleague Nigel Dutton, said: "It was a fantastic day, we had great bands, great company and no trouble.

"More than 2,000 people came out throughout the day despite the weather not being great, so we have to thank everyone for making time to come out.

"It has convinced us to go again next year, we really want to build something here to put Willenhall back on the map."

Anyone interested in volunteering to help make Lock Stock Live at Willenhall park bigger and better next year should contact the organisation team via Facebook by searching Lock Stock Willenhall.

Walsall mayor Marco Longhi gets into the sixties vibe with Lara and Susan Constable

ROBBERY

Knife threats as Spar raiders strike

TWO knife-wielding robbers threatened staff at a shop before fleeing on bicycles with a haul of cash. Spar in High Street, Pelsall, was targeted around 9pm on Sunday. Both suspects covered their faces with scarves.

A West Midlands Police spokeswoman said: "Police were called to the Spar store in Pelsall High Street just after 9pm to a report of an armed robbery.

"One of the men is described as wearing a blue jacket with an orange rim on the hood, while the other was in a grey hooded jacket with blue jeans. Investigations remain on-going and anyone with information or who witnessed what happened is asked to call 101."

POLICE

Burglar stole key following break-in

A BURGLAR stole a house key after already breaking in to the home. The thief also fled with a haul of electrical items from the property during the daytime raid at Stamping Way, Bloxwich.

It took place between 9.45am and 1.30pm on Friday.

A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "Please remember to check that you have closed and locked all doors and windows before you go out. Avoid leaving keys in locks."

HEALTH

Patients to have say on shake-up

THOUSANDS of patients affected by plans for a radical shake-up of Walsall's GP services are being urged to have their say.

Healthwatch Walsall wants to hear from as many people as possible across the borough over Walsall's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) plans to close two doctors surgeries, merge a further six and scrap weekend and out-of-hours appointments for five of them. To take the Healthwatch survey email info@healthwatchwalsall.co.uk or call 01922 665010.

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Homeless man pitches up at busy island

The tent on the island

A HOMELESS man has put up a tent in the middle of one Wolverhampton's busiest roundabouts.

The blue tent at Vine Island on the A449 Stafford Road, at Fordhouses, was first spotted two weeks ago. It prompted people to express concern on social media for the person living there.

The tent's occupant, a 43-year-old man from Wolverhampton, said he has been sleeping on the island, but only erected the tent overnight on Wednesday August 23.

The man, who did not give his name, said he had been homeless since April. He added: "There are plenty of places I could go but I don't want to be with people I don't know. I would rather be on my own and here is as good as anywhere. It has been all right here. People have been really kind and given me money. I don't beg for it."

The former general labourer said he had been visited by representatives from the charity P3, who offered to provide him with a food package.

Staff at Wolverhampton Council have also dropped by. The authority says it has concerns for the man's safety and has referred the matter to the police.

A spokesman for the council, said: "Members of our outreach team have visited the man concerned and offered him accommodation and general assistance, which he has declined. Our main concern at this moment in time is the man's safety and the distraction to motorists and pedestrians on what is a busy road. He has been urged to move on and the matter has now been passed onto the anti-social behaviour team and the police to manage the situation."

226 die while waiting for organ transplant

MORE than 200 people in Black Country and Staffordshire have died while waiting for an organ transplant in the last decade.

The shocking figure was revealed by NHS Blood and Transplant in a desperate bid to get more donors.

A total of 119 of those who died lived in Walsall, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Sandwell while 107 were from Staffordshire. Twenty nine died in Shropshire and the total number of lives lost in the West Midlands over the same period was 302.

Twenty five of the deaths were in Walsall, 35 in Wolverhampton, 24 in Dudley and 35 in Sandwell.

Now 129 more people face a similar risk while waiting for a donor in the Black Country and a further 105 are in the same situation in Staffordshire. But NHS bosses reckon hundreds of lifesaving transplants are being missed every year because families had not been made aware of what their relatives wishes were.

Unnecessarily

They believe many people think it 'safer' to say no to a donation request on behalf of another person when they really do not know what the person thought about the issue.

Anthony Clarkson, Assistant Director of Organ Donation and Transplantation for NHS Blood and Transplant, which revealed the statistics at the start of Organ Donation Week, said: "It is a tragedy that people are dying unnecessarily waiting for transplants. This week tell your family you want to save lives. A few words now can make an extraordinary difference. If you want to save lives don't leave it too late to talk to your family. In the West Midlands and Staffordshire there are over a million people on the NHS Organ Donor Register."

There is a particular need for black and Asian donors in the West Midlands with 186 black or Asian people from the West Midlands currently waiting for a transplant while in Staffordshire the figure is 22.

Grieving father rides to remember son

Left: Emotional day – Steve Guy kisses wife Angela at the finishing line. Right: Joe, seen in his team colours

GRIEVING Steve Guy paid an emotional tribute to his talented cyclist son Joe – three months after the 16-year-old was killed in a road accident.

The 56-year-old father of three made a last minute decision to take part in the 20k bike ride – won by Joe at the age of 14 – that accompanies the annual Wolverhampton Marathon, which took place on Sunday.

Rising star Joe was training to become a professional time trial rider when fatally injured in an accident with a van at Vicarage Road, Four Ashes on May 31. Mr Guy, who took up bike racing when aged 18, rode one of his son's cycles on the ride of remembrance and finished in tears. He said: "I was thinking of him all the way round the course. It was very emotional but I am pleased I did it."

Mr Guy, who had two punctures during the event after deciding to take part just days before the start, wore his Wolverhampton Wheelers colours and added: "I had done this race with Joe since he was 10."

He was accompanied for much of the ride by cycling legend Hugh Porter who said: "He was carrying a heavy legacy and talked a lot about his son on the way. He did very well."

Patients are kept waiting before they are admitted

AMBULANCES were kept waiting for more than 1,000 hours before they could drop off patients in just one month at hospitals in the Black Country and Staffordshire.

Patients were forced to wait up to two hours in ambulances and corridors before being taken into hospital care, according to new figures.

At Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley, paramedics wasted 338 hours waiting to handover patients in June. One patient had to wait 1 hour 56 minutes.

At New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton the paramedics were forced to waste 262 hours in the same month, at Walsall Manor 172 hours, Sandwell 121 hours and at Royal Stoke University Hospital and County Hospital in Stafford 172 hours. The time wasted is calculated by adding the total number of waiting hours AFTER the targeted 15 minute patient handover period.

Hospital trusts risk financial penalties for delaying ambulance staff – £200 per patient waiting between 30 and 60 minutes, £1,000 per patient waiting more than an hour. Walsall Healthcare NHS trust said: "There are moments of high demand due to surges of activity and seasonal pressure which may lead to ambulance waits."

Family in tribute to hit-run victim

THE family of a taxi driver killed in a hit-and-run have paid tribute to their 'shining light'. Police have named Mohammed Shezad as the 47-year-old man struck in City Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, at 1.50am on Tuesday. He had been standing next to his car.

The car that hit him failed to stop at the scene. A statement released on behalf of his family said: "Mohammed was a shining light on everyone who knew him. He will be missed more than words can express."

He was further described as 'a loving father, devoted husband and best friend to everyone'. Police are appealing to trace a dark coloured people carrier car.

Anyone with information can call 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 quoting 193 of August 29.

Tools and mower taken in shed raid

A SHED was broken into on Ogley Road in Brownhills. A Flymo lawnmower was taken as well as a large quantity of garden tools. The incident happened sometime between 6.30pm last Tuesday and 9am on Wednesday with police now looking into it.

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City centre shops will be cleared in huge scheme

DECAYING shops in Wolverhampton city centre are to be demolished – paving the way for multi-million pound redevelopment.

The desolate units in Bell Street, which have not seen trade for a decade, are directly opposite the new four-floor Debenhams, which is set to open within weeks. Asbestos had been found in the old shops but Wolverhampton council has now given the green light for demolition to begin.

Work, including the removal of the asbestos will begin next week, with demolition to start in October. City Demolition will head up the project.

The site, which is owned by the council, will be transformed into a temporary car park while a permanent use as part of the city centre's £1 billion regeneration is agreed.

Council leader, Councillor Roger Lawrence, said: "That row of shops is in a very poor condition and really needs to come down."

The vacant units – between the Forbidden Planet shop and the entrance to the Mander Centre car park – used to house a furniture shop, an amusement arcade and clothes shop. They were bought by the local authority in April last year.

The 93,000 sq ft Debenhams is due to open next month as the revamped Mander Centre's anchor store. The existing market will be replaced with a £55m Westside development.

Comic Doreen is full of miss-chef

COMEDY queen Doreen Tipton gives a tongue in cheek performance as 'Nigella Lawsuit' in a new video released online. The Black Country comedienne rustles up a microwave ready-meal in the two-minute cooking show spoof.

The show's presenter, Nigella Lawsuit, uses seductive and saucy methods made famous by namesake Nigella Lawson.

Speaking into the camera, she says: "I am going to show you how to knock up a meal in just a few minutes. I think it is really important to get fresh ingredients so first of all you must check the sell-by date and look, it is right there on the front. You can see that is nice and fresh. In fact I only bought that this morning."

Water gets blame

MORE than a third of people from the West Midlands said in a survey that they believe the water in their area has damaged their home appliances.

It was revealed by Best Water Technology.

Goodyear plant closure marks end of era

Wayne Devaney, with his scrapbook

GOODYEAR finally closed the curtain on nearly 90 years of manufacturing – marking the end of an era for the iconic Black Country plant.

The tyre-making factory was opened in 1927 and was on its way to employing more than 6,500 people at its peak in the early 1980s. But last Thursday, 12 workers employed to help during the 'closing down period' of the iconic Bushbury Lane site arrived for work last Thursday at 6.30am – by noon the gates were shut for good.

Plant protection workers Roger Simpson, aged 64, from Cannock, Steve Corbett, 61, from Shifnal, and Ray Homer, 60, from Claregate, welcomed the last shift workers, shaking hands and wishing them well. The three friends have clocked up a combined total of 97 years at the factory. Former staff members also made their way to the site to mark the end of an era, and a T-shirt with 'Bad Year' printed on the front was left on the entrance gates. Wayne Devaney, of Wednesfield, who worked at the plant for 28 years alongside his late father Michael and sister Bernadette, arrived with a scrapbook of memories and photographs. The 55-year-old, who left in January 2016, said: "It's totally devastating. It was a great place to work and everybody worked so hard."

Cyril Barratt, chairman of the Unite branch at Goodyear, said: "I am absolutely gutted that the place has closed. It feels like a break up of a family." In a statement, Goodyear bosses said: "We are very grateful to our associates for their continued support and professionalism during the closure of the plant."

£150,000 paid out to suspended NHS staff

A HEALTH trust paid almost £150,000 to suspended staff in just three years.

Inadequate Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, which runs Walsall's Manor Hospital, paid £147,628 to suspended staff between April 2013 and March 2016.

The money is made up of 22 suspensions, including one staff nurse who was suspended for 10 months before being dismissed.

She was paid more than £23,000 during this period, some of which was made up of sick leave, and was sacked for 'misuse of official position and intentionally deceiving the trust'.

Of the 22 suspensions, eight staff were dismissed, eight were given a final warning, four had no case to answer, one was given formal counselling and one quit the trust.

Financial

There were 11 paid suspensions in the 2013/14 financial year at a cost of £92,319, compared to five at a cost of £20,923 in 2014/15 and six at a cost of £34,386 in 2015/16.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust did not confirm the exact roles of the 22 suspended staff, but did confirm 15 were clinical and seven non-clinical.

Louise Ludgrove, the interim director of organisational development and HR for Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust, said any suspension decision is taken following 'careful consideration'.

She added: "In common with other large organisations throughout the country, we take the decision to suspend a member of staff after carefully considering individual circumstances on a case by case basis. This might include following an allegation of misconduct or gross misconduct.

"This decision is taken following careful consideration of the information available and is a neutral act that does not assume guilt which is why suspended staff continue to receive their pay. The Trust considers suspension is appropriate and justified if it defuses a particular situation in the workplace, removes a potential risk to patients, staff and property and better allows a thorough investigation."

Picture perfect view of viaduct work

The amazing view of the M5 with the reflection of the intricate scaffolding work from the canal

IS it a 'magic eye' picture? Is it modern art? This mind-boggling shot is actually taken from just a few miles away – after refocusing, you may recognise it as the Oldbury Viaduct between junctions 1 and 2 of the M5.

This photograph was taken by Phil Wild, a 64-year-old amateur photographer. Based in Lower Gornal, Mr Wild has been a keen photographer for all his life but since his retirement it has turned into a full-time hobby. He uses a Canon EOS 650 camera and 70-200mm lens, which he bought in department store John Lewis five years ago. His inspiration for the photograph was that he wanted to show people what was going on inside the viaduct and the lighting on Bank Holiday Sunday this year allowed him to do that. He said: "One of my favourite elements was the line of the canal leading you to the centre of the photograph."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Disused pub fire fuels arson probe

AN arson attack on a disused pub is being investigated by police.

Firefighters were called to tackle the blaze inside the old Royal Exchange in Bloxwich, Walsall.

The flames were started near wooden chairs on the ground floor of the premises on Stafford Road shortly before West Midlands Fire Service was alerted at 8.26pm on Tuesday.

A fire service spokeswoman said: "Crews made a forced entry. Two breathing apparatus and one hose reel were in use.

"The fire was put down as arson and police were requested. The property was left in the hands of the owner."

Church concert to celebrate heritage

A NIGHT of live entertainment celebrating the Black Country will be held next month.

The Black Country Concert is on October 7 at Central Hall Methodist Church, Ablewell Street, Walsall.

A dozen performers will congregate to mark the occasion. Organiser Christine Gregory said: "It will celebrate the proud heritage, customs and traditions of the Black Country."

Tickets costing £6 per person are available from Central Hall.

All money will go towards the church's work in the community.

Praise for estate officer's efforts

A POLICE officer has been praised for his work in preventing anti-social behaviour on a Walsall estate.

Pc Paul Benton was thanked after helping to resolve residents' complaints about issues on the Beechdale estate. Complaints included abusive behaviour, intimidation and criminal damage.

Pc Benton managed to secure a public space protection order on the estate to stop nuisance and the community's distress.

Now, calls about anti-social behaviour have fallen by 30 per cent

Dinosaur fun for children at arcade

AN arcade finished the school summer holidays with a prehistoric visitor.

The Victorian Arcade in Walsall held a Jurassic Park themed event on Saturday, August 26, where youngsters were invited to attend one of three meet-the-dinosaur performances, as well as get up close and personal with a giant walkabout T-Rex.

Darren Griffiths from the arcade said: "I'm thrilled we were able to finish the school break off in style."

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COUNTY NEWS

£7.3bn cost if you stick with Big Six

UK households have forked out an extra £7.3 billion over the last five years by remaining customers of the Big Six energy firms, a new report shows.

Ofgem data compiled by energy provider Bulb found that families who held accounts with the biggest firms – including British Gas, SSE, E.ON, Npower, EDF and Scottish Power – for at least five years paid out an average £853 more than they needed to over the period.

The report explained that while Big Six firms tend to offer cheaper fixed tariffs in order to "entice" new customers, those tariffs tend to expire within one to two years.

Feeling the heat at chilli festival

THE Birmingham Chilli Festival is back, at Brindleyplace on September 16. There will be the annual chilli themed market along with nerve-wracking challenges, physical activities and of course, plenty of spice.

This year, the festival will be raising the stakes with a 100ft forward-facing abseil from number 4 Brindleyplace to raise funds for one of their 2017 charity partners, Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity.

The festival will take place between 11am and 7pm in Central Square. To find out more visit www.brindleyplace.com

Warning to car trip dog owners

MORE than half of dog owners in the West Midlands could be breaking the law while driving with their pet.

A total of 53 per cent of dog owners in the region are unaware that their pet should be restrained.

The figures have been released as part of a campaign by the Dogs Trust called The Houndway Code. The results show that 44 per cent of owners do not restrain their dogs with a harness and a quarter admitted to finding them a distraction.

Comic O'Grady is top of pooch list

COMEDIAN Paul O'Grady has been voted the West Midlands' favourite dog-loving celebrity.

The presenter of Blind Date came ahead of Tom Hardy and The Queen in the survey run by DogBuddy.com.

He said: "I am really flattered when up against such tough competition. I used to take my dog Buster to the pub all the time as he was handy for getting me home at closing time!"

Murdered James's funeral takes place

THE funeral of murdered Aldridge man James Brindley took place on Friday. The popular model died in his parents arms after he was stabbed in the heart while walking down the high street after a night out at around midnight on June 23.

He was on the phone to his girlfriend moments just before it happened. Four students coming back from their prom came across him on High Street and stayed with him until the paramedics arrived on the scene but could not save his life.

His funeral was held at St Mary's Church in his local town at 11am with close family and friends.

There has been a tremendous response to his fundraising page to help the family with funeral costs, reaching almost £16,000 – a thousand more than their target. Two men were charged and are due to appear in court later this year. Aaron Kahrod, 20, from Walsall Road, Aldridge, and a youth aged 17, who cannot be named for legal reasons, are accused of the killing.

It followed an emotional appeal from his parents, Beverley Brindley and Mark Brindley, for the killers to come forward. Plus Crimestoppers issued a £10,000 reward to find them in hope that anyone with information would come forward so those responsible can be convicted.

In the first time his parents spoke out in early July, his mother said: "We felt guilty seeing the sun rise on that next morning, and have every morning since."

Donations can be made https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/jamesbrindley

Nuisance neighbour at tower block jailed

By Carl Jackson

AN out-of-control tower block tenant who made his pregnant neighbour's life a misery has been locked up by a judge.

Lee Stuart Boston has been a 14th-floor tenant of Humphries House, London Drive, Brownhills, Walsall, since 2013.

Beneath him lives "vulnerable" Andrea Price, who was heavily pregnant when she was tortured by screaming and banging noises coming through her ceiling. Now a new mum, Ms Price and her baby boy were woken at all hours by "immense noise" coming from Mr Boston's flat.

After she complained to social landlord, Walsall Housing Group, they took up her case before Judge Philip Gregory at Walsall County Court. And the judge handed Mr Boston an eight-week jail term for contempt of court. The court heard Mr Boston was hit with an injunction in December last year, forbidding him from causing a nuisance to neighbours in the block.

The judge described how, when two female housing officers visited his flat, his behaviour was "frankly outrageous". "He subjected them to a tirade of foul-mouthed abuse coupled with the threats of harm to her and to others. He went so far as to threaten to kill her," he added.

Later, CCTV footage showed him fronting up "in a deeply intimidating way" to an elderly man. Mrs Price was "heavily pregnant" when, in May, she was disturbed by foul language at high volume coming through her ceiling.

Judge Gregory ruled that Mr Boston had breached the injunction four times. Mr Boston was also ordered to pay £1,217.50 in legal costs. Judge Gregory jailed Mr Boston on July 14, 2017, but a transcript of his decision has only recently been published.

Dreams, trophies and Frank's fiercest fight

Frank Bruno, centre, with Tony Wilson and Gareth Woodberry at Ramada Park Hall Hotel in Wolverhampton

HE was a fierce fighter with huge punching power – but in appearance he is warm, friendly and self-effacing.

Former world boxing champion Frank Bruno MBE spoke with great modesty before a packed evening in the Black Country, which helped raise money for a Walsall sports foundation.

At the Ramada Park Hall Hotel, he told the 150 guests of his triumphs, including defeating Oliver McCall to win the WBC title, to his struggles with mental health.

The 55-year-old, born in Hammersmith in London, answered questions from compere comedian Jed Stone for more than an hour at the event on Thursday night.

He said it was always his dream to become a champion boxer, having turned professional at the age of 21 in 1982, and then achieving 21 straight knock-outs.

And following success winning the European Heavyweight Title he beat South African Gerrie Coetzee and veteran Joe Bugner. He then faced Mike Tyson for the WBC title.

Asked by Mr Stone why he did not finish Tyson off despite appearing to be on top during the fight in 1989, he replied: "I tried to finish him, but all I did was make him more angry. He was the fiercest fighter I ever faced."

After a loss against Lennox Lewis for the title again,

Ex-Caparo workers get payouts for short notice

WORKERS who lost their jobs when a Darlaston steel firm went into administration have been awarded a total of nearly £50,000 after complaining they were not given enough warning.

Caparo Atlas Fastenings Ltd went into administration in 2015 putting about 129 employees on the dole after facing problems.

As a result the union Unite – formerly the Transport and General Workers Union – made legal claims for protective awards for the redundant workers at Birmingham Employment Tribunal after complaining the employers failed to carry out suitable consultations under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act.

Other Caparo plants were also affected in the Midlands but the tribunal dealt only with those at Darlaston.

The tribunal was told that 129 workers were sent from Darlaston on October 30 2015.

Consultation with the union and employees had been curtailed from the required 45 days to eight working days, it was said.

The firm said it had failed to find a buyer for the Darlaston site and had no option but to close. They said no protection awards should be made due to special circumstances and added that consultations had taken place.

Tribunal judge Mrs Pam Hughes said, however, she was satisfied consultations had not taken place for the required statutory period.

She said protective awards should be made by the respondents for all those at the Darlaston site for a period of 75 days. The average total for each employee could be £3,500 or more – making a total of up to £50,000.

Ex-pub's new lease of life

A MULTI-MILLION pound transformation of a fire-ravaged pub into a supported housing development has almost been completed.

The former Bulls Head pub in Bloxwich, Walsall, closed down in 2007 and was hit by an arson attack in 2011, causing part of the first-floor and interior walls to collapse. It was poised to become another pub and then a supermarket before housing group Bromford acquired the site.

The company is now in the latter stages of completing a two-storey supported housing scheme called Saxon Court. As part of a £1.5m investment, Saxon Court is being built by Bromford's in-house construction team.

And with the final roof tiles being added, the new homes are set to open by the end of October.

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No-licence motorist in crash after police chase

AN uninsured motorist without a driving licence caused a near head-on crash while trying to flee from police at twice the speed limit, a judge heard. David Till was wanted for questioning in relation to an unrelated matter when spotted at the wheel of a friend's parked Mazda in Long Acre Street, Walsall, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

As a police officer got out of his car to question him the 22-year-old fled.

Police patrols in the area were alerted as he sped through residential streets at up to 60mph in a 30mph zone, said Mr Jamie Scott, prosecuting, who continued: "He lost control while turning left at speed, drove onto the wrong side of the road and crashed into an oncoming Peugeot car."

Till abandoned the Mazda and fled on foot. Mr Oliver Woolhouse, defending, said: "At the time he was living a lifestyle that caused considerable trouble for himself and those around him." The other vehicle was driven by a woman whose 13-year-old daughter was in the front seat passenger, the court heard. Both were taken to hospital with minor injuries, added the prosecutor.

Till from Portsea Street, Leamore, admitted dangerous driving and having neither insurance nor a valid licence. He was jailed for 10 months and banned from driving for two and a half years.

Hughes hits out at Labour plans

LABOUR has 'abandoned' the people of Walsall over Brexit, according to one of the town's MPs.

Walsall North MP Eddie Hughes, who won the seat for the Tories in June, hit out over plans by Labour to keep Britain in the single market and customs union during a long transition people.

Taking to Twitter, he said: "Labour have turned their backs on the 68 per cent of voters in Walsall North who voted to leave the EU. They accept open borders and no global trade.

"Walsall North voted 68 per cent to leave the EU because it's not working for us. Labour have now shown they've abandoned the people of Walsall North. Labour are for the few and against the many."

Sounds of soul

A NORTHERN soul night is coming to Wolverhampton's revamped Wulfrun Hall on November 25. Goldsoul will feature DJs from across the West Midlands. Tickets are £7.50 in advance or and £10 on the door.

Cycle of event, to raise hospice cash

Julia, Dave, Chris and Karen Jones

A PAIR of life-long friends have helped organise an epic bike ride from John O'Groats to Land's End with their husbands to raise funds for St Giles Walsall Hospice.

But Julia Jones and her friend Karon Jones won't be the ones getting saddle sore in the name of charity. The pair will share the driving while husbands Dave and Chris get on their bikes in memory of Julia's dad Allan Murray, from Streetly.

A keen golfer and cyclist, Allan completed his own John O'Groats to Land's End cycling challenge 26 years ago. After being admitted to St Giles in 2014, Allan decided to give the much-loved bike he'd used for the ride to his son-in-law Dave.

"Dad realised he was dying of cancer so he wanted to give his most treasured things to the people he knew would look after them," said Julia. "He knew Dave enjoyed cycling so he gave him his bike. That's when Dave promised he would complete the same journey to raise funds for St Giles. When we told my best friend Karon about the bike ride, her husband Chris said he'd go with him and Karon offered to share the driving with me. Dad was delighted. He'd been so well cared for at St Giles that it was nice to think he could give something back to the people that had looked after him."

The father of three who had five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, died at St Giles Walsall Hospice in February 2014 aged 75 after a long battle with bowel cancer. To support Dave and Chris visit: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/jonesjogle. To find out more about St Giles visit: www.stgileshospice.com

£1.4m black hole after violence in home soars

A SURGE in domestic violence has piled pressure on to children's social care services in Walsall, leaving the council facing a £1.4m black hole.

In just three months Walsall Council has received 1,511 referrals – more than 500 a month – compared to 4,586 in the whole of last year, which works out at less than 400 a month.

In April, May and June a total of 1,142 requests for support were made to the authority's 'Early Help' service for those aged up to the age of 19. Out of those 139 were due to neglect, 127 were down to domestic abuse against parents and carers and 115 were recorded as a result of physical abuse.

The issues have caused a spike in the number of children subject to protection plans in the borough with the number jumping from 333 in March by a quarter to 421 by the end of June.

A council report said: "Reasons are largely an increase in high level domestic abuse i.e. physical assaults, breach of non-molestation orders etc. and also an increase in referrals of physical abuse as well as an increase in referrals from schools."

Complicated

The council is now predicting an overspend of £4.5m on its childrens services and education department in 2017/18.

And even though they have plans in place to save £1.9m as well as raid reserves to to the tune of £1.2m, it will still leave a £1.4m shortfall at the end of the year.

The increase in social worker and legal costs associated with complicated looked after children cases account for the nearly half of that gap - £720,000 - according to a council finance report.

It comes after the Walsall Domestic Violence Forum shut down in 2016 after operating in the town for more than 20 years due to a lack of funding.

An NSPCC spokesman said: "It is vital that prompt and appropriate action is taken when concerns are raised about the welfare of a child, to ensure they get the help they need."

Injunction call at airport after convoy

The caravans which set up camp at Aldridge Airport, which residents say is becoming a regular problem

AN injunction to prevent travellers from setting up camp at Aldridge Airfield again is being sought after the latest encampment was moved on.

Travellers set up camp at Aldridge Airfield for the second time in four weeks on August 31 – prompting calls for a permanent injunction to ban them from the site. Dozens of caravans arrived on the land, off Bosty Lane, ahead of the Bank Holiday weekend and were moved along over the last weekend. The previous convoy pitched up at the end of July.

Councillor John Rochelle has said that council officers are 'looking into' the idea of bringing in an injunction to cover the site.

The council introduced an injunction earlier this year giving it the power to move encampments on within 24 hours at a dozen other sites across the borough – including Anchor Meadow in Aldridge.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Belper belter for ramblers group

THE Walsall Group of the Ramblers will be heading to Belper for a nine-mile circular walk on Sunday, 'A Belter from Belper' is a moderate walk along and above the Derwent Valley.

Non-members are always welcome and can obtain more information from the walk leader on 07582 091 920

But before that on Saturday, the group has another in its programme of short summer walks, about four miles from Walsall Arboretum.

The meeting point is the car park at Oak Park C. P. (Lichfield Road) at 9.30am. More information can be obtained on 01922 479486.

Inmate dies after collapse in jail

AN inmate has died after collapsing in HMP Featherstone, near Willenhall.

West Midlands Ambulance service was called to the prison at 9am on Thursday to reports of a man who had collapsed.

Two ambulances were sent to the scene and one took the man to New Cross Hospital for treatment at 9.49am.

The man was later pronounced dead at hospital. West Midlands Police were called to attend the prison at 11am.

The police have confirmed that an investigation is now underway.

Busy railway line reopened

RAILWAY lines shut for more than two weeks while multi-million pound work was carried out have reopened.

London Midland has thanked passengers for their patience while the firm worked on electrifying the route between Rugeley Trent Valley and Walsall.

It opened up again yesterday after 16 days of work, which formed part of the Railway Upgrade Plan to electrify the line and make it faster, quieter and better for the environment compared to diesel trains that currently use the route.

Free taster classes to learn new lingo

A TEACHER is offering free taster classes to children in an effort to get them excited about learning a second language.

Kat Stevenson, who lives in Walsall, has opened a Kidslingo franchise that will teach French and Spanish to preschoolers and primary school children in the area. Anyone who would like to book a free taster session can email kat.stevenson@kidslingo.co.uk or call 07739308932.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Excellent strategy to avoid core problems

GREAT news. Thanks to the excellent policies of local government, the Black Country's main town centres are doing exceptionally well. This is in no small part down to the excellent Black Country Core Strategy drawn up in 2011.

That's exactly what I thought when I walked through Dudley over the weekend, and surveyed the vast array of huge, glossy stores which have flocked to the town over the past six years. All those exciting payday lenders and charity shops.

We know our towns are thriving, because it says so in the consultation document for the Black Country Core Strategy. Yep, it's now time for the great and the good to ask for our vote of confidence, so they can give us more of the same.

Actually, it didn't say Dudley was thriving. Because if you read the fine print of the document – and the councils behind it know that most of us won't – the authors came up with a rather novel way of dealing with Dudley's decline. By redefining a town centre.

Of course, they redefined the Black Country years ago. And while I doubt whether many people feel any great affinity with a Black Country defined by 1970s local authority boundaries, at least we know what they mean.

However, the way that they redefined the term "town centre" is really quite special. Shortly before the publication of their vision, the signs for Brierley Hill town centre were quietly moved. Not just a few yards, but nearly a mile, so they are around the perimeter of the Merry Hill centre. The plan then redefined Merry Hill as being one of the "four strategic town centres for the Black Country", and quietly erased Dudley from the map. And that is the basis of the claim that our "main town centres" are thriving.

If you do want to have your say, consultation closes on Friday, although local councils also have their own definition of "consultation": "The exercise of telling people what they should be thinking, and then setting up a mechanism where only those who support it will reply."

Helpfully, they have decided to cut through the gobbledegook by providing a rather patronising questionnaire for "non-experts", which is filled with platitudes and loaded questions like: "Do you think people's health and wellbeing should be a key issue?" Dunno, can I have a few extra days to think about it?

It also asks: "Should we focus the growth of shopping, leisure and commercial development into our main town centres?" Depends how you define a town centre, doesn't it?

Ed and Geoff pitch in with colourful standpoints

Tom Burke – A number of issues with his role in the latest thriller from the Beeb

Hellboy and back – Ed Skrein, who found things were not all white in the latest superhero reboot

Geoffrey Boycott – did he get caught out making an off-colour comment?

Taking Strike at new TV thriller's realism

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

DRIVERLESS Lorries to Hit British Roads (headline this week). Precisely. And what else will they hit?

I WAS tempted by one of the ice-cream sweets on offer at a restaurant because it was "garnished with a malted ball." A malted ball? What exotic, sophisticated and perfectly crafted amuse-bouche might this be? Turned out to be a Malteser.

TWO questions hang over the Beeb's latest private-eye drama, Strike. Firstly, would it ever have made it into production if the "Robert Galbraith" who wrote the original novels had not been revealed as one J K Rowling? I doubt it. Secondly, why on earth is everyone so keen to chat to the private detective, Cormoran Strike? Why would the investigating police officer even deign to meet Strike? Why would the murdered woman's driver blab? Why would the concierge at her flat take Strike on a guided tour of the exclusive apartments, including the residents' swimming pool – surely a sacking offence? Take it from me, as one who spent a career trying to get people to talk about awkward issues, it is never that easy.

I SUGGESTED that new laws are needed to make pedestrians behave safely. It turns out to be an ancient argument. Back in 1942, the Autocar Handbook commented on "jay walking" laws in force in parts of Europe. But in Britain "much opposition has come from those who hold the ancient rights of the walker to be inviolable." Nothing has changed. In the name of our ancient liberties we are free to walk – and free to die.

SOME scientists believe dementia could be avoided by adding lithium to our tap water. So let me be the first to alert you to the Great Lithium Conspiracy. It is, of course, a wicked plan concocted by the Illuminati, the shadowy figures who really control this planet, to introduce a sinister chemical into our water to take us over by controlling our minds and polluting our precious bodily fluids. It is part of their Master Plan which also involved kidnapping Elvis, assassinating John Lennon, faking the moon landings and murdering Princess Di (because she knew about the lithium). Do not touch a drop of lithiumised water without first wrapping your head in aluminium foil. Pass it on before they get you, too.

I ADMIT that until this week I had never heard of Ed Skrein. I admit, too, that I had to read reports of his "whitewash" campaign several times before understanding what he was banging on about. In a nutshell, Mr Skrein, an actor, was expected to play Major Ben Daimo in a new film, Hellboy: Rise of the Blood Queen. Then he discovered that in the original Hellboy comics, Daimo (an entirely fictitious character) was of mixed-Asian heritage. After some protests from Asian activists, Skrein turned down the job, declaring: "I must do what I feel is right." For doing so, Skrein is a right-on hero. The Guardian hails his "inspiring protest against the invisibility of Asian people in the media." But the contradictions are endless. How, for example, does Skrein's decision fit in with the modern and thoroughly enlightened trend for colour-blind casting? If we can't have a white Major Daimo, how can we even discuss Idris Elba becoming the first black James Bond? As for the alleged "invisibility of Asian people in the media," what about Bollywood and martial-arts movies which are full of Indian and Chinese stars? Would Ed Skrein turn down the part of Hamlet on the grounds that he is not Danish? If not, why not?

IF you need evidence that our civilisation is in decline, look no further than the bank-holiday queues for cut-price Prosecco at some Lidl branches which descended into ugliness when stocks ran out. "My weekend is ruined," howled one hysterical Twitter user facing the unspeakable horror of having to pay £5.79 for a bottle of bubbly instead of the £3.33 offer. Ruination is not what it used to be.

GEOFF Boycott, a 76-year-old Yorkshireman, will keep his cricket commentating job despite his ill judged comment that the only way for him to get a knighthood would be to 'black me face'. Some accused him of racism for his remark but we should not ignore Boycott's own ethnicity. As 76-year-old Yorkshiremen go, he is a soft old woolly liberal.

TALKING POINT

Time for letting the world see real you

I MET up with a friend recently – one I have known for years and have spent many a pleasant evening over dinner catching up with all her latest family news. I was only too aware of all the problems she had had to face over the past weeks/months but did not feel that I should ask in case it upset her.

So I simply said: "How are things?' To which she replied with a smile on her face, "Just fine thanks" and we moved on. I knew that things were anything but fine but it's amazing how many people spend their lives doing that – painting a smile on their face and pretending everything is all right. And they do say that a problem shared and all that. . .

Maybe sometimes the problems are too personal and too difficult to talk about, and I understand that, but trying to stifle how they feel must surely make it harder to deal with and lead to even more stress.

We are all guilty to a certain extent. How many times at work have people greeted you with a cheery smile and said: "You Ok?" for you to reply "Yes thanks". Many times I am sure they really don't want to hear how you actually feel. It is just a greeting not an actual question. Perhaps if you turned round and said: "Well actually I feel sh**." they would run a mile. Stress is such a big problem these days and can lead to not eating properly and lack of sleep which add to health worries. In many cases depression is ignored, or seen as a stigma, and so the person is left to deal with it alone.

But these days, with the suicide rate in young people on the rise, there are initiatives that can help. And members of the Royal Family are leading the way.

Prince Harry recently revealed he "shut down all his emotions" for two decades after losing his mother Princess Diana. Harry admitted he sought therapy and took up boxing to combat frustration. Twenty years on and he finally found the strength to open up about the struggles the two brothers faced following their mother's death.

They, along with the Duchess of Cambridge, have teamed up for the Heads Together campaign, which works to dispel the stigma surrounding mental health.

Bringing people together in similar situations to talk about their problems means they do not feel that they have to face them alone. They can learn from people who may have been through similar difficulties how better to cope so that that the smiles people see are not false and they don't feel so alone. Surely it's worth a try.

SUE ATTWATER

Spin king Hammond has too much influence

A FIFTH column of remain MPs in the cabinet and the wider Parliamentary Conservative Party led by Philip Hammond are exploiting the opportunity presented by the catastrophic general election to halt Brexit.

The stature of Hammond's office of state, inferior only to the enfeebled Prime Minister's, offers him an unacceptably influential platform to spin his strategy, all in the name of the economy and British business.

We have only recently reached the anniversary of the referendum, when 17.4 million patriotic Brits voted to leave the European Union, establishing the biggest ever democratic mandate from the British people, but the mass media portray a different story.

The referendum is already ancient history, Britain has not in fact escaped the economic Armageddon predicted by George Osborne and his allies in the global elite, it has been merely delayed, while Europe under the stewardship of Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel restore the continent to post-war prosperity.

Employment, salaries, exports and growth in the UK are all up while Macron's popularity plummets amid a tepid increase in Eurozone output following decade-long stagnation.

Indeed, last week marked the ten year anniversary of the first rumblings of the financial crisis. Incredibly, the commentariat have taken to nostalgically pining after leaders of the pedigree of Alistair Darling and Gordon Brown, the very men who deregulated British finance to near oblivion before heaping loads of extra debt onto the public balance sheet.

ALAN DAVIS
Darlaston

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Checkout new rules on 5p bags

TESCO has announced its intention to stop selling 5p plastic carrier bags. Let's hope all superstores follow this initiative. Shoppers have decided to recycle with 'a bag for a life' or bring their own bags. Streets, gardens, open land, trees and hedgerows will be cleaner and tidier as a result.

The fate of the 5p bag you hastily purchased can seem insignificant. No, both nature and our local environment are better off without plastic pollution.

Become a reformed bagaholic, change your ways too. There is hope for us all.

Cheap plastic bags belong in the bin permanently. Our streams, canals, rivers, streets and local places will all benefit from less plastic pollution. Well done superstores, now let's all play our part in resisting one-off plastic bags that are ruining England's green and pleasant land and polluting our waterways and seas.

CLLR DOUG JAMES
Walsall

Mindless yobs need proper punishment

I ABSOLUTELY despair at some of the stories that have been appearing in your paper recently about mindless vandalism and out of control yobs, but the latest story to appear that really got to me was about the nursery 'Tots Care Play Group' that was trashed over the weekend! What on earth motivates these mindless amoebas to carry out this kind of behaviour?

These cretins are treated with respect, if they are ever caught, and just get a slap on the wrist! I can't believe that they actually used the tots garden as a toilet, what kind of filthy animals must these low life's be? It's about time that the courts got tough with this and similar behaviour and started handing out hard sentences. I hope the owners and staff manage to repair the damage done.

IAN HUNTER
Willenhall

Palamino pals of the past hope

I AM a retired headmaster and a music fan. Back in the late 1970s, my friends and I used to follow a local band called 'Palamino'. They were a five-piece band that played original songs as well as covers of songs by Steely Dan, Dan Fogelberg and Billy Joel. One of our favourites was an original song called 'Brasilia'.

My friends were David and Chris Brain, Mark Jones and Andrew Barnett, all from Walsall. We saw Palamino live at many venues, including Brewood Village Hall in October 1978. I recorded this concert, in stereo and have recently transferred this to digital media.

Should any of my long-lost friends, fans of Palamino or, indeed the band members of Palamino read this, please get in touch and I will furnish you with the CD of that concert from 1978. A truly great band and such happy memories.

STEVEN RONSON
North Yorkshire
croxdenabbey@yahoo.

Shocking scale of drug use in West Midlands revealed

By Rob Golledge

THE full scale of the West Midlands' drug problem has been laid bare by a shocking high-level police report.

There are 22,500 regular heroin and cocaine users in the region with drug abuse costing public services £1.4 billion every year in health, care and police costs.

Users of the Class A substances responsible for half of crimes such as theft, robbery and burglary – equal to 43,000 crimes a year in the West Midlands with every heroin and cocaine user costing the region £60,000.

And a person is dying of drugs poisoning every three days in the region.

The findings are made in a bombshell report by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner who said the country's current drugs policy is 'failing' and leading to more crime.

The dossier also reveals that 150,000 people used drugs in the West Midlands last year, of which 117,000 smoked cannabis.

Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said: "Despite the good work being done by many, collectively the policy is failing. This failure means the public put up with more crime, public services are put under more strain, and not enough is done to reduce the harm of those suffering from addiction. We have higher crime rates and there are more victims of crime because of the collective failure to tackle the issues surrounding drugs."

Changes to McKechnie site on way

A MAMMOTH factory site that has been plagued by vandals and arsonists is to finally be redeveloped. The former McKechnie Brass factory has sat abandoned in the middle of Aldridge for nearly four years and has become a hotspot for criminals.

But troubles at the site are set to come to an end after planning chiefs in Walsall approved an application last Thursday that will see the remains of the factory demolished. The St Francis Group,based in Aldridge, also received permission to change the use of the site to include light industrial purposes.

McKechnie dated back more than a century but shut down in 2013 amid debts of £3.8 million, causing 60 job losses. Before its closure, the site was thought to be the UK's last remaining factory making brass rods and copper wires for a range of products.

An artist's impression of the new site following the demolition of the McKechnie premises in Aldridge

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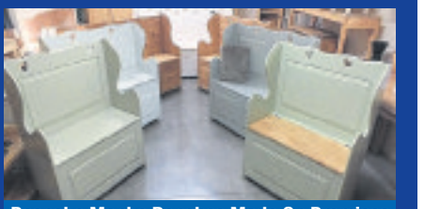

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Delight as Tommy's fund for new legs hits £20k

LITTLE Tommy Brown who lost both his legs and his right arm to meningitis is to get new legs thanks to a five-year fundraising campaign.

The youngster's parents, Julie Tuckley and Dean Brown, have been fundraising for their boy ever since tragedy struck when he was just five months old. After dozens of fundraisers involving a number of famous faces, the £20,000 target has been hit.

Mother Julie, from Lister Close, Walsall, said: "Everybody has been absolutely amazing, we are so grateful. Words cannot explain how much everyone has done."

Tommy Brown who lost his legs to meningitis, with his big sister Elle, 14

Available

However despite the money needed being raised, Tommy, now aged five, will have to wait to get his new legs due to his age. Julie explained: "We have been fundraising for Tommy all his life. He is not ready for his new legs yet but when he is the money will be available for him. He finds it hard to get about with his normal NHS legs but he needs to wait until he can walk better in them before getting his new legs.

"We do not want to make the mistake of going private and getting a pair of legs, only for him to outgrow them and us need to buy a new pair in 18 months – which we would not be able to afford."

The fundraising target was hit thanks to West Bromwich Albion, Tommy's favourite club, holding a collection for him before the home match against Stoke. He was made community champion in a day he 'loved'.

The Baggies have done lots to help out young Tommy, including helping with a special charity night and captain Jonny Evans providing numerous items to be auctioned off. Previous events to raise money for Tommy have included a swimathon and a charity snooker night, featuring former world champion Ken Doherty.

Back in 2012 Tommy was given just a five per cent chance of survival after contracting meningococcal septicaemia, leaving doctors forced to amputate both his lower legs, his right arm and some of the fingers on his left hand.

Julie, 41, said: "I want my baby to have the legs you see some of the former soldiers have. They did nothing wrong and neither did my baby. When he is a teenager I want him to be able to run round like everyone else. He defied the odds."

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Disused land near retail park is eyed up

A PATCH of disused land could become the site for a major jobs boost under new plans.

A planning application from Brackley Property Developments has been submitted to Walsall Council for land on Reedswood Way, opposite the popular Reedswood Retail Park, which was developed around 15 years ago.

Since then, the land to the west of the retail park has been unmanaged. However, plans have been submitted to build an 18,500 square foot employment development, with Brackley confident it will lead to new jobs in the area.

A statement from the developers reads: "Since the re-development of the adjacent commercial area was completed approximately 15 years ago, the site has been an unmanaged brownfield site comprising grass, shrubs and vegetation.

"The proposed development will deliver sustainable commercial development that will have significant regeneration benefits by bringing vacant land back into use, creating local jobs and generating investment

By Jordan Harris

to support the local economy.

"The illustrative masterplan is indicative only and it is not known what form the final development will take. It may comprise a single building or a number of buildings depending on what the commercial market requires ."

Councillor Tina Jukes, who represents the Birchills Leamore ward said: "I welcome the plans because we don't have enough developments like this in our area, where we can bring jobs for local people.

"We have a great community but the area is a bit deprived in terms of its economy, this could be a big boost."

Saved by a whisker – and a diet of oats

The orphaned mouse at the RSPCA centre, after being rescued. Picture: RSPCA

AN orphaned mouse has been enjoying a breakfast almost the same size as him, after he was rescued by the RSPCA.

The two-week-old, two-inch woodmouse was found in Walsall, close to the body of his dead mother. He was taken to an RSPCA rescue centre where workers began feeding him a special diet made up of porridge and digestive biscuits to help him grow. He was fed porridge through a pipette four times a day when he first arrived, but has since started to feed himself from the milk bottle top.

It was reported that the manager of the centre, Lee Stewart, said: "Porridge works well for our orphaned mice, it's packed full of vitamins and minerals. They get fed porridge twice a day, as well as crumbled up digestive biscuits. They will be ready to go back to the wild before we know it."

The news comes just weeks after another incident when Walsall RSPCA took five kittens into foster care after they were dumped in a crisp box.

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Students win spots in skills competition

THREE talented beauty students have won top spots at a skills competition. The Walsall College students put themselves forward The Skills Show Regional Heats, which assess students' knowledge, practical skills and employability.

Level 3 Beauty Therapy student Stephanie Blower won second place place in the body competition and Level 2 Beauty Therapy student Grace Potter took third place in the hands and face competition. A day later in the hands and face competition, Level 2 Beauty Therapy student Bailey Wilkin was awarded first place, naming her the best in her chosen field. Louise Perry, a lecturer in beauty therapy, said: "We are extremely proud of our students."

Walsall poker pro Usman wins $300k in Barcelona

A POKER pro has been celebrating over the last few days, after winning nearly 300,000 dollars.

Usman Siddique, from Walsall, won the eye-watering amount of money after finishing in sixth place in a tournament in Barcelona.

Mr Siddique battled through seven gruelling days and 1,682 players to reach the final table of the PokerStars Championship Barcelona tournament at Casino Barcelona.

Sweden's Sebastian Sorensson eventually won the tournament, scooping nearly one million dollars in the process. Nevertheless it was a huge payout for the Walsall player, who has now won more than 800,000 dollars playing the increasingly-popular game.

Usman Siddique, who has won nearly

Back in April this year he won £105,000 after finishing third at a tournament in Nottingham. The year before that he took home £84,100 and a trophy after topping the field at an event in London.

He follows in the footsteps of fellow Walsall pro Kully Sidhu, who has won nearly 2.5million dollars from the card game.

The New Invention star is 34th on England's all time money list after some huge wins in the game, including 600,000 dollars from a trip to Las Vegas last summer.

Mr Siddique, who studied at Sneyd Comprehensive School in Bloxwich, worked with his father at Bentley clothing store Sidhu Fashions after leaving De Montfort University, where he had developed a love for the game.

He tried to forge his professional career while balancing it with work but decided to call it quits at age 20 when he felt things weren't going his way.

He didn't play cards for six months but soon got back in the swing of things, continuing his work at the clothes shop while preparing for a leap into the professional world.

Fire breaks out in wing of prison

A FIRE broke out at HMP Featherstone amid claims of violent disorder on one of the wings.

Specialist prison officers were needed to deal with the incident, which happened last Tuesday evening.

A member of the public contacted the Press claiming he had received a call from an inmate reporting there was a fire on one of the wings as well as violent scenes.

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) confirmed the incident was being dealt with, while Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service dispatched one engine to the Category C men's lock-up.

Nobody was injured and the incident was resolved shortly before midnight.

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Saddlers fan's 'ferry blunder' just a prank

IT was a laugh-out-loud situation – a West Midlands football fan who thought he bagged a deal on a guest house before an away game on the south coast, but ended up on the Isle of Wight.

Walsall fan Davey Drew shared his nightmare experience following his team on an away trip to Portsmouth on social media.

It was shared on Twitter thousands of times and read by 2.5 million users. The story was also picked up by media around the world.

His ordeal touched the hearts of many travelling football supporters as well as Walsall Footbnall Club, which offered to pay his ferry fare from the island.

The tweet supposedly showing the crossing

Walsall manager Jon Whitney

'Davey Drew' appears to own up to the hoax in this tweet

Fun

But it has now emerged that the story is not quite what it seems.

"I did the whole thing for a bit of fun," said the supporter, who goes under the account @Daveysaddler after joining Twitter in January.

"I picked up on a story that was doing the rounds, found a perfect archive shot of the ferry ride, knew it was funny as I was tweeting it I was crying, but never knew it would go so big. Never meant to cause harm, just a fun tweet."

He offered his 398 followers a cryptic clue on the truth of the matter, tweeting: "We laugh at what makes us laugh.....whether it's true or not....we still laugh if it hits that spot."

The story started on August 18, the day before Walsall's game at Portsmouth's Fratton Park. In a tweet, he said he had grabbed 'an absolute bargain', finding the Abingdon Guest House, 11 miles from the city.

Some fans did spot the problem – the guest house was on the Isle of Wight – and tweeted the supporter. But on the day of the game, at midday, he tweeted again, this time a picture of the ferry crossing and a message full of expletives.

The story was immediately picked up by the world's media.

Following Walsall's game, team manager Jon Whitney was asked about the fan's experience.

He said: "We'll pay his fare for him, we'll help him out." A week later, the supporter said: "A whole football club, players, manager, fans, local media, national media. I'm Davey Drew."

A spokesman for Walsall FC said: "While this story had given everyone at the club a few laughs, we are glad Davey didn't really waste his money by accidentally booking a hotel on the Isle of Wight.

"Thankfully, the Park Inn Hotel in Walsall is right next to the Banks's Stadium should Davey find himself booking a hotel for a home game in the near future."

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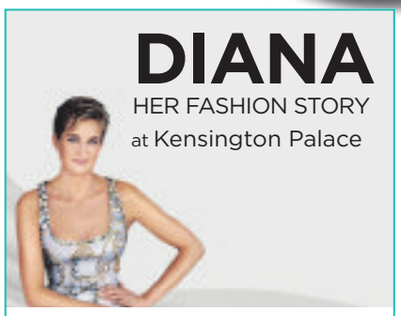

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Brum drivers have dirtiest cars – survey

BRUMMIE drivers are top when it comes to the UK's messiest cars, according to a new study.

Figures released by car leasing firm UK Carline have revealed that drivers in Birmingham top the table for dirty motors, with owners only cleaning vehicles inside and outside once a year or less. A total of 19 per cent in the second city admitted they rarely cleaned their cars, coming first over London and Manchester.

Overall, the study revealed 29 per cent of UK car owners waited more than three months before cleaning their cars, despite 69 per cent of respondents admitted to spilling either food or drinks, with 14 per cent letting the food go mouldy. A further 11 per cent have slept in their cars too.

Stolen Staffie Molly returned to centre after public appeal

A DOG stolen from a rescue centre has been returned following a public appeal. Molly, a Staffordshire bull terrier, was taken from Rosedene Rescue Centre in Walsall on Sunday.

The 11-month-old dog was taken by a woman who had failed to return her after a walk, after leaving fake ID and a fake address.

Following an article in the Chronicle's sister paper, the Express & Star, and various social media posts, the rescue centre received a call from a man in Great Barr claiming he had the dog.

Molly, the Staffordshire bull terrier

Rachel Isley, of the Rosedene Rescue Centre, said: "We're absolutely delighted she's back. We can't quite believe it.

"When we saw she wasn't back on Monday, we feared the worse. We were contacted by a member of the public who said he'd been offered her in the street for £100. They ended up giving over the dog for free and said they had to leave the area.

"That's more for the police to look into now but I'd just like to say a massive thank you to everyone who shared the post and spread the word.

"It's amazing to see how many people genuinely care. We've had vets, other rescue centres and so many wonderful people share the post and that's made a difference."

The original Facebook post received more than 21,000 shares. Molly had only been at the rescue centre for three weeks before being taken.

She had originally been bought from Gumtree by an animal lover who had realised she was being sold for bait.

But she had handed Molly over to Rosedene after realising she could not look after her. Following the incident, those who wish to do walk dogs will now have to go through a stricter security process.

Be there then, as Liam lines up Brum gig

LIAM Gallagher will play a show in Birmingham later this year. The Oasis icon will play the city centre as part of his As You Were Tour. He was the lead singer of Oasis, and later Beady Eye, before embarking on a solo career.

His tour marks the release of latest album As You Were, due out on October 6. Liam will play the Barclaycard Arena (which will by that time be named Arena Birmingham) on December 12. Pre-order As You Were from Liam's official webstore before 10am on September 5 for access to exclusive pre-sale tickets from 10am on September 6.

Tickets go on sale on the venue site from 10am on September 8. Entry to the show will be priced from £42.15.

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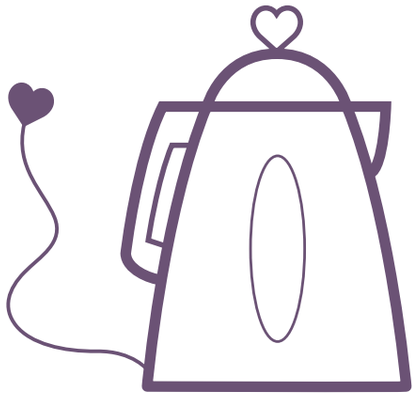

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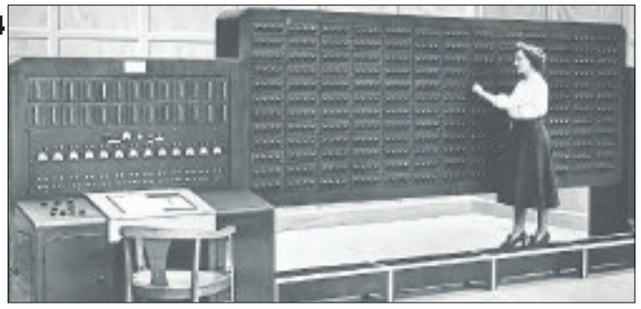
Working the Boulton Paul computer in 1951

Generator at the Tettenhall Transport Heritage Centre

Boulton Paul power controls being assembled

Boulton Paul-built Commando canoe

Boulton & Paul's first aircraft 19815

Great Scott! Line lives on

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

IN 1947 a team of Antarctic explorers found Scott's hut buried in the snow.

It was carefully excavated and has been preserved since, contents where they were left by Captain Scott and his ill-fated team.

It is possible to visit the hut, but only accompanied by New Zealand minders. The hut was made by Boulton & Paul Ltd, then in Norwich, famous at the time for prefabricated buildings, despatched the world over, bungalows, chapels, army huts, etc.

A Boulton & Paul flat-pack corrugated-iron chapel can be found at Draycott-in-the-Clay in Staffordshire. This is a company which survived for more than 200 years by innovation and adaption. They made cast-iron products, wire-netting on steam-powered looms, engines and generators, electric-driven water pumps, and, as woodworkers ,were brought into aircraft production in the First World War. The aircraft department was sold off and came to Wolverhampton in 1934, but they still had an eye for diversity. They made one of the country's first mainframes computers in 1951, not just assembling it, but making all of the individual parts. At the end of the war they were making Commando canoes as well as aircraft. They made metal furniture, the power controls for Concorde, ocean-going cable-laying equipment and propellant tanks for space vehicles. Many items are on display at the Tettenhall Transport Heritage Centre who are now looking for a piano, with a cast-iron frame made by Boulton & Paul.

Just after celebrating their 200th anniversary the company closed but the product line was sold off to Moog Aviation, who built a new factory on i54. This is a product line which began 200 years ago and now includes parts for the new F-35B Lightning fighters for the Navy's new aircraft carriers.

Captain Scott's hut in the Antarctic

Stocks kept inside Captain Scott's hut

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Photos galore to help trace family histories

FROM mining displays to 'now and then' photos, an annual history exhibition is back to showcase Cheslyn Hay's past.

People, Places, Maps and Mines will have a display of 9,000 photographs for visitors with an interest in tracing their family tree.

The exhibition is being staged by Cheslyn Hay History Society, which is aiming to help people piece together their family tree and also provide birth and death certificates to help.

Past and present photographs will also be on show and there is a chance to view artefacts which include punishment books from schools and in the 1980s to censuses.

The spotlight will fall on the coal industry with a mining display where children can win a prize.

Guide

Society chairman Malcolm Podmore, aged 65, of Cheslyn Hay, said: "In the past we've had a couple of hundred visitors, it's been very popular."

Society members will be available to guide people through the exhibition, which includes a look back at hurrier girls.

"In the 1800s it was quite normal for children to work down the mines, and there was a section of workers called hurriers," Mr Podmore said.

"They used kids of seven to years of age to push the tubs full of coal in and out of the pit. One child would pull at the front and another at the back."

Live music will be played, and there will be refreshments throughout the day, The event takes place on September 30 at Cheslyn Hay Community Centre on Pinfold Lane from 10am to 4pm. Admission is free.

Elyse Barber, aged 12, from Great Wyrley poses as a hurrier girl

Chief praises union boss

THE head of the police officer's union has been praised by the Chief Constable of Staffordshire after announcing he will retire.

Steve White, chairman of the Police Federation of England and Wales, will leave his post on December 31, with elections for his successor expected in November.

Gareth Morgan tweeted: "Wishing Steve well as he moves on from what has been at times a thankless task – he's led with integrity and tenacity. He navigated politics and personalities, remaining focused on his members."

The federation represents 120,000 rank-and-file police officers. Mr White had been in post for three years.

Announcing his departure, he said: "I have been proud to lead the organisation during a period of significant change but feel it is time for the next stage of our continuing reform to progress under new leadership."

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Aldridge School: Excellence is the key

Commercial feature

Aldridge School operates as an Academy Trust, and now as a founder academy of the Mercian Trust.

Headteacher David Mountney said: "We provide a comprehensive and traditional education which is both academic and rooted strongly in its community. We apply our motto to all that we do: Achieving excellence together.

"Students consistently achieve at the very highest level and each year Aldridge provides a comprehensive and traditional education which is both academic and rooted strongly in its community. Aldridge School teachers use their subject expertise and detailed knowledge of what pupils already understand, know and can do, to plan lessons. Pupils are typically well-mannered and keen to do well. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*- C grade passes at GCSE including English and maths is above the national average.

Excellence

"Most students go on to higher education including some of the most prestigious universities in the country. Our belief is that all pupils can achieve excellence with the right support and challenge. The school prides itself on helping young people to achieve whatever their ability, and we celebrate the successes of pupils in a great variety of activities – sport, music, drama, community and charity work, as well as in the classroom."

Aldridge School was inspected by Ofsted in February 2017 and was graded as a good school in every aspect. The report noted that: "Behaviour is good because pupils respect each other. Pupils feel safe. Teaching is good and improving. Pupils are smartly dressed and proud of their school."

Mr Mountney added: "We are delighted with the outcome of the latest inspection and very happy that the Ofsted inspectors recognised our vision for a well-rounded education which strikes a balance between personal development and academic excellence. We believe that it is effort and hard work which makes success and high achievement.

"We are committed to a broad-based academic curriculum ensuring that all will have the chance to study the core subjects including English, maths, science, languages, humanities and the wider subjects including art, music, sport and technology.

"We also provide vocational options to meet the needs of our pupils. We are a school which believes that academic, sporting and artistic endeavour are equally valuable learning experiences. We believe that teachers should be highly-trained professionals sharing a sense of community, a commitment to creative and challenging learning and a love of the job.

"We are committed to our system of pastoral care which ensures that every pupil is taken care of as an individual. We believe that parents, governors and our wider community have a vital role to play in helping ensure that the pupils grow and develop in a suitably supportive and challenging environment.

"Our aim is to ensure that pupils leave the school equipped with the best possible academic outcomes and are resilient, resourceful and reflective individuals capable of realising their potential through lifelong learning and becoming an active member of society."

Aldridge School teachers use their subject expertise and detailed knowledge of what pupils already understand

There are vocational options provided to meet the needs of pupils

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X Factor's Diana has Look of Love

Diana Vickers, who found fame on X Factor, will recreate the magic of Dusty Springfield when she stars in Son of a Preacher Man at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Tuesday to September 16.

The production tells the story of three broken hearts, one Soho hang-out, and the only man who could ever help them.

Diana was thrilled to be asked and announced the role on Instagram: "Very excited to announce I will be starring in the brand new stage show of Son of a Preacher Man.

"Very much looking forward to working with a great team on what I think will be a gem of a show! Hope to see some of you there."

Choreographer Craig Revel Horwood added: "I am delighted to bring to life for the very first time this wonderful story created by Warner Brown, with soulful songs from the legendary Dusty Springfield's iconic music catalogue.

"I hope that audiences will come to love this warm-hearted and uplifting new musical as much as I do."

New Alexandra Theatre spokeswoman Fiona McCartney says: "Welcome to the Preacher Man, the swinging 1960s Soho joint where the kids danced the night away to the latest crazes and dared to dream of love, while the legendary owner, The Preacher Man himself, dispensed advice to cure the loneliest of hearts.

"Only, that was a long time ago and all that remains are the memories, the stories and the myths. Until now, that is, when three random strangers, generations apart but all in need of help with their hopeless love lives, are inexplicably drawn to the site of the original venue.

"The Preacher Man is long gone, but his son, with help from the wonderful Cappuccino Sisters, might just find it in himself to channel the spirit of The Preacher Man and once more give these three lovesick strangers the look of love."

ATTENTION

The play features the greatest hits of Dusty Springfield, including The Look Of Love, I Only Want To Be With You, Spooky and the classic Son Of A Preacher Man.

Directed and choreographed by Strictly Come Dancing's Craig, it stars Diana (Little Voice, Rocky Horror Show, X Factor), Debra Stephenson (The Impressions Show, Bad Girls, Coronation Street) and Ian Reddington (Benidorm, Shameless, Robin Hood).

Diana first came to the public's attention when she was a semi-finalist on the 2008 edition of X Factor. She hit the road with her fellow finalists after the show before landing a career in the West End.

She had been prepared for stardom by taking singing lessons as a youngster in Blackburn – though she didn't sing professionally until adulthood.

Her X Factor entry came about with a cover of Damien Rice's hit The Blower's Daughter, which dazzled Louis Walsh and Cheryl Cole among others. Simon Cowell described her as a Marmite artist – who he loved.

He later signed her to his label and her debut album, Songs from the Tainted Cherry Tree, later became a number one and earned her a gold disc.

Gradually, the star also developed an acting career after starring in a newly- revived West End production of Jim Cartwright's The Rise and Fall of Little Voice in October 2009 at the Vaudeville Theatre, on The Strand, London.

She played a character called Little Voice, impersonating such singers as Shirley Bassey, Edith Piaf and Judy Garland.

She also moved into the movies after landing a debut film role alongside Clint Eastwood's son in The Perfect Wave, which was about surfing and the power of life and death. Diana developed a fashion line, described as boho-chic and hippie-influenced, that was inspired by Brigitte Bardot and Marilyn Monroe. And she has remained busy ever since, combining her fashion dreams with roles in theatre.

Most recently, she played Janet in a touring production of The Rocky Horror Picture Show. And there are plenty more roles that she'd like to play. She's a fan of Grease and would like to play Sandy. "I'd love to. Although Rizzo would be incredible, you'd rather be Rizzo wouldn't you, because she's just sexier? I like bad characters!"

Though she works formidably hard, Diana takes time out to switch off and relax. Her favourite hobby is reading and she gets sucked into a good book.

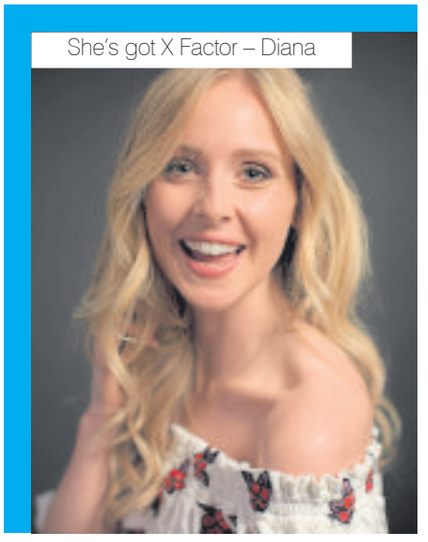
"I do a lot of baking when I'm stressed. And I love exercising, running, gym classes, yoga, interval training. Then just normal things like chilling with my friends, playing music loudly . . . and having a glass of wine after the show always helps!"

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

Diana will bring the hits of Dusty Springfield back to life

Hard work – in rehearsals

Star cast – Debra, Ian and Diana


She's got X Factor – Diana

The Human League

1980s hit-makers are in a League of their own

One of the biggest British bands of the 1980s will be giving fans Electric Dreams when they perform at Wolverhampton Racecourse on Saturday.

Synth pop legends The Human League will be in concert following a race meeting on September 9.

The Sheffield new wave outfit, led by Phil Oakey and also featuring vocals from Joanne Catherall and Susan Ann Sulley, will play as part of The SunBets Music Live 2017 meeting at Dunstall's all-weather track.

The band, famed for their cross-Atlantic number one hit Don't You Want Me – which sold more than 20 million – will play their classic 1980s hits including Love Action, Mirror Man, Fascination and Human.

When the group played in the city in December 2014 at the Civic Hall, an Express & Star review of that gig hailed the group as 'modern pop music perfection'.

The Human League have returned to the area in recent years and they performed at Uttoxeter Racecourse last year, marking 35 years since the release of their best-selling album Dare!

Since 1978, the Human League have released nine studio albums, four EPs and 30 singles with Don't You Want Me entering the top 20 again just four years ago.

Tickets to the event start from £35.95 with family tickets for £110. These can be bought directly from the racecourse by calling 01902 390 000 or online at the wolverhampton-racecourse.co.uk website.

The flat racing takes place from 5.25 to 8.30pm with the concert held after the final race.

Dave is back on the home Beat

The Beat, featuring original co-frontman and singer Dave Wakeling, have a homecoming gig in Birmingham for the musician who now resides in Los Angeles.

The gig on Friday, September 15, part of a UK tour, is Wakeling's first in the city since the death of the original band's Birmingham-based veteran saxophonist Saxa.

Wakeling has been putting the finishing touches to his first studio album under The Beat moniker since Special Beat Service in 1982. Tentatively titled Here We Go Love, it's an album of uplifting ska rhythms, infectious pop hooks and some Californian sunshine which reflects Wakeling's adopted home.

The Beat exploded out of Brum in 1979 as part of the same ska/rock/reggae scene that launched The Specials and UB40. Dave Wakeling enjoyed further success in the States with supergroup General Public and released a solo album No Warning in 1991.

Wakeling has played an estimated thousand shows as the frontman of The English Beat, most in the USA where he continues to command a devoted audience.

Straddling 2 Tone, [illegible] and post-punk, The Beat had a host of hits – including Mirror In The Bathroom, Too Nice To Talk To, Hands Off She's Mine and hit covers of Tears Of A Clown and Can't Get Used To Losing You.

For tickets to see Wakeling's seven-piece incarnation of The Beat at Birmingham's O2 Academy 2, supported by Frantic Action and Ruder Than U, see academymusicgroup.com/o2academybirmingham/ website.

Another version of The Beat, featuring Ranking Roger, are touring with The Selecter.

Whip smart play is domestic drama

A powerful play about privilege, power and how the past can affect the present is being staged at Birmingham Rep's venue The Door.

The Whip Hand by Scottish playwright Douglas Maxwell is a domestic drama set in Glasgow. When Dougie chooses his 50th birthday party to right an old wrong, it causes a family rift. With Jonathan Watson, from TV sit-com Two Doors Down, as Dougie, The Whip Hand runs at The Door until next Saturday, September 16.

Marvelettes time for Tamla Motown fans

Motown legends The Marvelettes are coming to the Black Country.

Soul enthusiast and Northern Soul DJ Hitsville Chalky is bringing the 1960s girl group over from Detroit for a concert at Brierley Hill Civic Hall on Friday, September 15.

The Marvelettes, who were actually signed to Tamla until that merged with sister label Motown, had one of the label's first US hits with chart-topper Please Mr Postman and had a UK hit with When You're Young And In Love.

The group features original member Katherine Anderson. There will also be DJ sets from Hitsville Chalky, Gary Parker and Catacombs legend Pep.

For tickets see tickets.bhillcivic.co.uk/boxoffice/book/1056 or call 01384 573381.

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SATURDAY'S TV SEPTEMBER 9

CHOICE

Radzi Chinyanganya

Cannonball
(ITV, 7pm)
Andrew Flintoff hosts the action-packed game show, in which 24 contestants are tasked with traversing a series of water-based challenges and custom-made inflatable obstacles, each designed to test their speed, accuracy, height and distance. The most successful contestants then claim a chance to launch themselves 'cannonball-style' at a moving target on the surface of a deep-water tank, all in the hope of nabbing the show's 'priceless' Cannonball Cup. Frankie Bridge, Radzi Chinyanganya, Ryan Hand and Maya Jama all join Andrew at the poolside to commentate on the action.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadiya's British Food Adventure. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Athletics: Great North CityGames. Gabby Logan presents coverage from the Newcastle Gateshead Quayside. **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.20** BBC News. **5.30** Regional Programme. **5.40** Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme.

6.10 Pointless Celebrities. Ruth Badger, Solomon Akhtar, Carl Fogarty, Jimmy Bullard, Craig Phillips, Nikki Grahame, Jamie Laing and Alex Mytton compete in a reality TV-themed edition. (R)

7.00 Strictly Come Dancing Launch Show 2017. New series. The pro-celebrity ballroom contest returns, with an opening spectacular featuring last year's champions Ore Oduba and Joanne Clifton performing their winning routine, plus music from Shania Twain and Rita Ora. The line-up this year features former Holby City star Chizzy Akudolu, Emmerdale and Hollyoaks alumnus Gemma Atkinson, 2008 X Factor winner Alexandra Burke, TV and radio comedy star Susan Calman, Radio 4 broadcaster the Rev Richard Coles, TV presenter Brian Conley, EastEnders' Davood Ghadami (Kush Kazemi), Good Morning Britain's Charlotte Hawkins and The Saturdays' singer Mollie King. Also treading the boards are This Morning's Ruth Langsford, Holby City actor Joe McFadden, JLS's Aston Merrygold, Paralympian Jonnie Peacock, TV chef Simon Rimmer, and Debbie McGee, whose late husband and performing partner Paul Daniels previously took to the dancefloor in 2010. This year, the "Queen of Latin" Shirley Ballas will be replacing Len Goodman on the judges' panel, with Bruno Tonioli, Craig Revel Horwood and Darcey Bussell all returning to appraise the talents of the amateur dancers and their professional partners.

8.40 BBC News; Weather.

9.00 Last Night of the Proms.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest top-flight matches.

11.55 The NFL Show. Mark Chapman looks at the major stories shaping the NFL world.

12.25 Film: The Rookie. (2002) **2.25** Weather for the Week Ahead.

BBC2

6.15 How We Won the War. (R) **6.45** The Lancaster: Britain's Flying Past. (R) **7.45 Film:** Vivacious Lady. (1938) **9.15 Film:** The Fox and the Child. (2007) **10.45** Railways of the Great War with Michael Portillo. (R) **11.15** Wanted Down Under. (R) **12.00** Rick Stein's Long Weekends. (R) **1.00** Coast Australia. (R) **1.50 Film:** Emma. (1996) Jane Austen drama, starring Gwyneth Paltrow. **3.45** Mastermind. (R) **4.15** University Challenge. (R) **4.45** Only Connect. (R) **5.15** Gardeners' World. (R)

6.15 The Big Family Cooking Showdown. Culinary competition hosted by Zoe Ball and Nadiya Hussain in which two families face a series of challenges based on the realities of everyday meals. (R)

7.15 Last Night of the Proms. Katie Derham presents live from London's Royal Albert Hall, where the BBC Proms' signature Last Night concert gets under way. Conductor Sakari Oramo leads the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus this evening, as they accompany soprano Nina Stemme in a performance of music from Wagner's Tristan and Isolde. The ensemble celebrates 100 years of Finnish independence with renditions of Sibelius's Finlandia and Kodaly's Budavari Te Deum, with help from soprano Lucy Crowe, mezzo Christine Rice, tenor Ben Johnson and bass John Relyea. Also featuring this evening is the premiere of Finnish composer Lotta Wennakoski's Flounce, and a performance of Malcolm Sergent's An Impression on a Windy Day.

9.00 Film: X+Y. (2014) Premiere. A specially awkward teenager finds it difficult to communicate with people, but finds comfort in his passion for numbers. However, while training to take part in the forthcoming International Mathematical Olympiad, he finds love with a kindred spirit. Comedy drama, starring Asa Butterfield, Rafe Spall and Sally Hawkins.

10.45 Film: What Women Want. (2000) A womanising executive gets a new insight into life when he accidentally gains the ability to hear the thoughts of the opposite sex. Romantic comedy, with Mel Gibson and Helen Hunt.

12.45 Film: Miss Bala. (2011) **2.35** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Oddbods. (R) **7.20** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Fangbone. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: The Powerpuff Girls. (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Star Wars: The Yoda Chronicles. (R) **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Saturday Morning with James Martin. **11.25** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** The X Factor. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Haydock. Coverage of this afternoon's meetings at Haydock Park, Kempton Park and Ascot. **4.30** The Chase. (R) **5.30** Regional Programme.**5.40** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 The Family Chase. Bradley Walsh hosts a family-themed edition of the game show. The French family from Wiltshire pit their general-knowledge know-how against that of professional quizzers.

7.00 Cannonball. Andrew Flintoff hosts the action-packed game show, in which 24 contestants are tasked with traversing a series of water-based challenges and custom-made inflatable obstacles, each designed to test their speed, accuracy, height and distance. The most successful contestants then claim a chance to launch themselves "cannonball-style" at a moving target on the surface of a deep-water tank, all in the hope of nabbing the show's "priceless" Cannonball Cup.

8.00 The X Factor. Dermot O'Leary presents as the nationwide talent contest continues apace in the third rounds of auditions. Another selection of would-be stars submit themselves for approval by uncompromising resident judges Louis Walsh, Nicole Scherzinger, Sharon Osbourne and Simon Cowell.

9.15 The Jonathan Ross Show.

10.20 ITV News; Weather.

10.35 Film: United 93. (2006) Fact-based drama about the fourth plane hijacked in the September 11 attacks, which was stopped from reaching its target by the passengers. With Christian Clemenson and Trish Gates.

12.40 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 Mobil 1 The Grid. **6.35** Motor Sport: Volkswagen Racing Cup. **7.05** Motor Sport: Mini Challenge. **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **8.55** Frasier. (R) **9.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **9.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.50** The Simpsons. (R) **11.20** The Simpsons. (R) **11.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.20** Come Dine with Me. (R) **12.50** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.25** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.55** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.25** Big House, Little House. **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **5.35** Location, Location, Location. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Shakespeare's Tomb. Documentary charting a two-year-long archeological investigation of William Shakespeare's grave at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon. The grave itself bears a curse condemning anyone who disturbs the Bard's final resting place, reading "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear/To dig the dust enclosed here/Blessed be the man that spares the stones/And cursed be he that moves my bones". For the first time since Shakespeare's death 400 years ago, the church has authorised archaeologists to conduct a study on the site, giving Kevin Colls of Staffordshire University, leading geophysicist Erica Utsi, and Cambridge historian Dr Helen Castor a chance to utilise state-of-the-art radar technology to build up a picture of what lies beneath the surface without disturbing the hallowed site. As the team reveals, the results of their examination contained a few unexpected surprises. (R)

8.00 Great Canal Journeys: India. Part two of two. Timothy West and Prunella Scales explore the Brahmaputra river, where they follow an old trade route, meet a community of monks and take a ride on an elephant. (R)

9.00 Film: X-Men: First Class. (2011) Superhero adventure prequel, starring James McAvoy, Michael Fassbender and Jennifer Lawrence.

11.40 Film: The Tourist. (2010) Romantic thriller, with Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie.

1.25 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.20** The State. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.20** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.55** Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **2.10** Police Interceptors. (R) **3.05** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.00** Murdered: Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R)

6.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. High Court Enforcement Agents Paul and Steve are sent to north London to evict a young Romanian mother who owes £6,000 in unpaid rent, but when they arrive, they discover a family home that is not quite what it appears to be. Meanwhile, in Kent, Brian and Alan turn up the pressure on a debtor who has admitted to owing more than £7,000, but claims he cannot afford to pay up – despite having a garage full of expensive tools. Later, in south-west London, Brian accompanies Delroy as he tries to recover a £400,000 debt from a residential property, and when the pair trace the defaulter to an upmarket cafe, the man in charge lies about his identity. (R)

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v West Indies. Mark Nicholas presents highlights of the third day of the Third Test, which took place at Lord's.

8.00 The Great Fire: London Burns. Dan Jones, Suzannah Lipscomb and Rob Bell take a look at the Great Fire of London by walking the route the fire took across the city, hour-by-hour and street-by-street. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games in the Championship, including Fulham v Cardiff City and Sunderland v Sheffield United.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including AFC Wimbledon v Portsmouth and Rotherham United v Bury.

10.30 Hijacked.

11.30 Criminals: Caught on Camera. (R)

11.55 Access. Showbiz news and gossip. (R)

12.10 SuperCasino. **3.10** Exploding Sun. **4.40** Access.

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Brain with David Eagleman **8.00** Swarm: Nature's Incredible Invasions **9.00** Inspector Montalbano **10.55** Top of the Pops: 1984 **11.30** Len Goodman's Dance Band Days **12.30** Andrew Marr on Churchill: Blood, Sweat and Oil Paint **1.30** Bright Lights, Brilliant Minds: A Tale of Three Cities **2.30** Swarm: Nature's Incredible Invasions **3.30** Close

ITV2
11.20 The X Factor **12.20** Celebrity Catchphrase **1.20** You've Been Framed! Gold Top 100 Talent **2.20** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.50 Film:** Paul Blart: Mall Cop (2009) **3.50** FYI Daily **3.55 Film:** Paul Blart: Mall Cop (2009) **4.45 Film:** Sweet Home Alabama (2002) **5.45** FYI Daily **5.50 Film:** Sweet Home Alabama (2002) **6.50 Film:** The Incredible Hulk (2008) **7.50** FYI Daily **7.55 Film:** The Incredible Hulk (2008) **9.00 Film:** American Pie 2 (2001) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** American Pie 2 (2001) **11.10** Family Guy **12.55 Film:** Forgetting Sarah Marshall (2008) **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.10 FYI Daily **11.15 Film:** The Secret Garden (1993) **12.15 Film:** Columbo: The Most Dangerous Match (1973) **1.50** Wycliffe **2.55** Foyle's War **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Foyle's War **11.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **1.00** An Audience with Victoria Wood **2.00** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
3.30 Quincy ME **4.30** The Professionals **5.35** Storage Wars **6.00** Storage Wars: Best of Jarrod and Brandi **6.30** Storage Wars: Best of Darrell and Brandon **7.00** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **8.00** Cycling: Tour of Britain **9.00 Film:** The Gauntlet (1977) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** The Gauntlet (1977) **11.15 Film:** Double Jeopardy (1999) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20 Film:** Double Jeopardy (1999) **1.30** Minder **2.25** Tommy Cooper

E4
11.30 Film: The Tigger Movie (2000) **1.00** The Big Bang Theory **1.55** Streetmate **3.00** Don't Tell the Bride **4.00** The Great British Bake Off **5.15** The Great British Bake Off: An Extra Slice **6.05** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** The A-Team (2010) **11.20** Naked Attraction

Film4
11.00 Destry Rides Again (1939) **1.00** Napoleon Dynamite (2004) **2.50** Marmaduke (2010) **4.35** The Hound of the Baskervilles (1959) **6.20** Seven Years in Tibet (1997) **9.00** Pitch Perfect (2012) **11.15** Shut In (2015) **1.00** The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 (1986) **3.05** Close

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SUNDAY'S TV SEPTEMBER 10

CHOICE

Grace Jones

All New Most Shocking Moments in Pop (Channel 5, 9pm)
A countdown of outrageous events and scandals from the pop world, including Grace Jones hitting Russell Harty on his chat show, George Michael's dubious driving, Solange's bust-up with Jay-Z, rock 'n' roll excess by 1970s rock band Deep Purple and the triumphant occasion when Sophie Ellis Bextor beat Victoria Beckham to the number one spot in the charts. With contributions from Rick Wakeman, Cheryl Baker, Liz McClarnon, Matt Richardson and Nina Myskow.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.05** Match of the Day. (R) **8.30** The Andrew Marr Show. **9.30** Great North Run. Gabby Logan presents coverage of the half-marathon that runs from Newcastle upon Tyne to South Shields, with approximately 57,000 runners set to take part this time around. **1.30** BBC News; Weather. **1.45** Fake or Fortune? (R) **2.45** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.30** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.15** Points of View. **4.30** Songs of Praise. **5.05 Film:** Shrek 2. (2004) Animated adventure sequel, with the voice of Mike Myers.

6.30 BBC News.

6.50 Regional Programme.

7.00 Countryfile. Ellie Harrison presents the show from Cornwall's Rame Peninsula, revealing the story of the area's last fisherman, who continues to use the traditional methods of his forefathers and is and is passing his skills on to disadvantaged youngsters. Plus, Tom Heap goes in search of Britain's traditional craftsmen and women.

8.00 Fake or Fortune? Fiona Bruce and Philip Mould investigate the history of two pictures, both of which are believed to be by Paul Gauguin, one of the giants of 19th-century art.

9.00 Strike – The Silkworm. Part one of a two-part adaptation of the second of JK Rowling's detective novels featuring private eye Cormoran Strike. The detective is hired by the wife of a notorious author to find her missing husband, only to discover the writer has been murdered in a manner remarkably similar to a scene in one of his books.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Swansea City v Newcastle United at the Liberty Stadium and Burnley v Crystal Palace at Turf Moor.

11.30 People Just Do Nothing. Steves kidnaps one of the KOLD FM team, driving Grindah to arrange a showdown with his rivals. Miche takes Angel's role in the school play a little too seriously.

12.00 Film: The Rebound. (2009) Romantic comedy, starring Catherine Zeta-Jones and Justin Bartha. **1.30** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.35** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 The Instant Gardener. (R) **6.45** Garden Rescue. (R) **7.30** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.30** The Beechgrove Garden. **9.00** Countryfile. (R) **10.00** The Hairy Bikers' Northern Exposure. (R) **11.00** My Life on a Plate. (R) **11.45** Lorraine's Fast, Fresh and Easy Food. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.45 Film:** Grand Prix. (1966) Motor racing drama, starring James Garner. **4.30** Coast. (R) **5.00** Flog It! (R)

6.00 Great North Run Highlights. Ore Oduba presents action from the half-marathon that ran from Newcastle upon Tyne to South Shields, as Vivian Cheruiyot attempted to retain her title in the women's elite race. With commentary from Steve Cram, Andrew Cotter and Paula Radcliffe, and reports by JJ Chalmers, Denise Lewis and Colin Jackson.

7.00 Tribes, Predators & Me. Gordon Buchanan sets out to gain a new understanding of fierce predators by meeting different tribes that hunt and live alongside them. He begins on Owarigi in the Solomon Islands, where the local men encounter dangerous sharks almost every day, even swimming alongside them as they freedive for the fish they need to survive. (R)

8.00 Astronauts: Do You Have What It Takes? The remaining candidates head to a secret facility in Sweden, where they are deliberately deprived of oxygen to see if they can recognise the signs of hypoxia.

9.00 Dragons' Den. The panel assess the profit-making potential of business plans involving beach towels, a range of novelty plush goods, and a form of packaging based around air.

10.00 Best Album 2017: Meet the Mercury Prize Nominees. Documentary previewing the shortlisted artists for 2017, hearing from musicians from the vanguard of grime, performance poetry and guitar rock.

10.30 Film: Broken. (2012) An 11-year-old girl witnesses a man being attacked by her neighbour, which destroys her innocent outlook on life. Drama, with Eloise Laurence, Tim Roth and Cillian Murphy.

11.55 Film: False Trail. (2011) Mystery, with Rolf Lassgard.

2.00 Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **2.55** Holby City. (R) **3.55** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Mission Employable. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Oddbods. (R) **7.20** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Ben 10. **8.30** Scrambled!: Be Cool, Scooby-Doo! (R) **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Judge Rinder. (R) **10.25** The Chase. (R) **11.25** Long Lost Family. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.30** Bear Grylls Survival School. (R) **1.00 Film:** You've Got Mail. (1998) Romantic comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan. **3.15** The X Factor. (R) **4.30** Victoria. (R) **5.30** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.40** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. Ben Shephard presents a celebrity edition of the quiz, in which contestants Julian Clary, Sara Cox and Alan Halsall answer questions to win turns on an arcade-style machine.

7.00 Coronation Street. Anna discovers Faye's plan to run away with Seb, family secrets threaten Peter and Toyah's future, and a frightened Rita has a go at Norris.

8.00 The X Factor. Dermot O'Leary presents the fourth rounds of auditions, as more would-be stars perform for Louis Walsh, Nicole Scherzinger, Sharon Osbourne and Simon Cowell.

9.00 Victoria. The queen is moved by the plight of a silk weaver in Spitalfields, and decides to throw a lavish medieval ball at the palace to help, with all attendees wearing outfits made in the area. Albert has his doubts about the plan, but finds himself seduced by the grandeur of the event. However, while the evening proves a success, reuniting old friends and creating new romances, it is greeted with outrage by the discontented public. **10.05 ITV News**; Weather.

10.20 Judge Rinder's Crime Stories. Barrister Robert Rinder examines the case of Gary Nelson, who murdered a bouncer and a community police officer, and was the subject of a 13-year investigation. (R)

11.20 5 Gold Rings. (R)

12.20 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Last Man Standing. **6.25** Last Man Standing. **6.45** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Simpsons. (R) **1.50 Film:** The Core. (2003) Sci-fi thriller, starring Aaron Eckhart. **4.20** The Crystal Maze. (R) **5.25** The Great British Bake Off. (R)

6.40 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year. George Clarke presents the entries in the Historic and Workshops and Studios categories. Among the finalists in these areas are a shed where a bestselling trilogy of novels were written and a build in Wales used for making prosthetic limbs for children around the world.

8.00 From Russia to Iran: Crossing the Wild Frontier. Levison Wood completes the final 1000 miles of his journey, travelling through Armenia and the Republic of Iran as he heads for the shores of the Caspian Sea. He meets a photojournalist documenting the struggle between Armenia and Azerbaijan for the contested state of Nagorno-Karabakh, and risks heading to the front line, where he meets a family caught in the crossfire and soldiers serving in the trenches. He also visits one of the world's largest salt lakes and joins a biker gang for a tour of Tehran. Last in the series.

9.00 Film: Kingsman: The Secret Service. (2015) Premiere. A streetwise teenager is taken under the wing of his dead father's old colleague, an agent working for a super-secret spy organisation. Will the youngster prove to be a chip off the old block by proving useful during a battle against a twisted, hi-tech genius? Action comedy based on a comic book, starring Colin Firth, Taron Egerton and Samuel L Jackson.

11.35 Film: Sin City: A Dame to Kill For. (2014) Compilation of four stories of crime and betrayal set in a dangerous city. Crime thriller sequel based on the comic-book series, starring Eva Green and Mickey Rourke.

1.25 Bruce Springsteen: In His Words. (R) **2.50** Gillette World Sport. **3.15** KOTV Boxing Weekly.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Poppy Cat. **6.10** Little Princess. (R) **6.25** Mr Men. (R) **6.35** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.55** Wissper. (R) **7.00** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.15** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.25** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.30** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.45** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.35** Floogals. (R) **8.50** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.00** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.15** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.40** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **1.00** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **2.00** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **3.05** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **4.05** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **5.05** All New Traffic Cops. (R)

6.05 All New Traffic Cops. Officers from the West Yorkshire Safer Roads team pursue a disqualified driver through Bradford, while a pensioner is knocked down in a hit-and-run incident in York. (R)

7.00 Cricket on 5. England v West Indies.

8.00 Aviva Premiership Rugby Highlights. Mark Durden-Smith and David Flatman introduce highlights from the second weekend of matches, including Northampton Saints v Leicester Tigers at Franklin's Gardens.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 All New Most Shocking Moments in Pop. A countdown of outrageous events and scandals from the pop world, including Grace Jones hitting Russell Harty on his chat show, George Michael's dubious driving, Solange's bust-up with Jay-Z, rock 'n' roll excess by 1970s rock band Deep Purple and the triumphant occasion when Sophie Ellis Bextor beat Victoria Beckham to the number one spot in the charts. With contributions from Rick Wakeman, Cheryl Baker, Liz McClarnon, Matt Richardson and Nina Myskow.

11.55 The Last Hours of Elvis Presley. Forensic pathologist Dr Richard Shepherd re-examines the medical evidence relating to the death of the American singer, who died in August 1977 at the age of 42. (R)

12.55 SuperCasino. **3.10** Liberace: In Life and Death. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 The Making of King Arthur **8.00** The Joy of Train Sets – The Model Railway Story **9.00** Horizon: Asteroids – The Good, the Bad and the Ugly **10.00** The Sky at Night **10.30** The 21st Century Race for Space **11.30** Horizon: Can We Make a Star on Earth? **12.30** Precision: The Measure of All Things **1.30** Horizon: Asteroids – The Good, the Bad and the Ugly **2.30** The Joy of Train Sets – The Model Railway Story **3.30** Close

ITV2

11.10 2Awesome: Ready, Set, Style **11.20** 2Awesome: Third Wheel **11.50** The X Factor **1.05** Take Me Out **2.10** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.40 Film:** Beethoven's 2nd (1993) **3.40** FYI Daily **3.45 Film:** Beethoven's 2nd (1993) **4.25 Film:** Step Up 2: The Streets (2008) **5.25** FYI Daily **5.30 Film:** Step Up 2: The Streets (2008) **6.25 Film:** King Kong (2005) **7.25** FYI Daily **7.30 Film:** King Kong (2005) **10.00** Family Guy **12.00** American Dad! **1.30** The Cleveland Show **2.25** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

12.25 Wycliffe **1.30 Film:** Columbo: A Deadly State of Mind (1975) **3.05 Film:** Carry On Matron (1972) **4.10** FYI Daily **4.15 Film:** Carry On Matron (1972) **4.55** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Sunday Night at the Palladium **10.00** An Audience with Victoria Wood **11.10** Foyle's War

ITV4

4.00 Pawn Stars **5.00 Film:** The Pink Panther (1963) **6.00** FYI Daily **6.05 Film:** The Pink Panther (1963) **7.30** River Monsters **8.00** Cycling: Tour of Britain **9.00** Car Crash Britain **10.00** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **11.05 Film:** United 93 (2006) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15 Film:** United 93 (2006) **1.15 Film:** Halloween H20 (1998) **2.15** FYI Daily **2.20 Film:** Halloween H20 (1998)

E4

11.00 Made in Chelsea: Ibiza **12.00** Don't Tell the Bride **1.00** Streetmate **2.05 Film:** Robots (2005) **3.55** Toy Story Toons: Partysaurus Rex **4.05** The Goldbergs **5.05** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Bad Teacher (2011) **10.50** Naked Attraction **11.50** Gogglebox

Film4

11.00 The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951) **1.00** Just Wright (2010) **3.00** Carry On Cabby (1963) **4.45** Bridge to Terabithia (2007) **6.35** Snow White & the Huntsman (2012) **9.00** Gladiator (2000) **12.00** Dogtooth (2009) **1.50** Cyrus (2010) **3.40** Close

PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
The Frozen Ground, Channel 5, 11.05pm
An Alaska state trooper tries to bring a serial killer who has been terrorising the Anchorage area for 13 years to justice. When a woman escapes the maniac's clutches, the lawman seeks her help in identifying him, but finds he will have a hard time earning her trust. Fact-based crime drama, with Nicolas Cage, John Cusack and Vanessa Hudgens. (2013)

TUESDAY
A Wife's Nightmare, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman who has just recovered from a mental breakdown returns home to pick up the pieces of her life – but her plans are thrown into disarray when a teenage girl claiming to be her husband's long-lost daughter arrives on her doorstep. Drama based on a true story, starring Jennifer Beals. (2014)

WEDNESDAY
Wall of Silence, Channel 5, 3.15pm
When a university student goes missing, her mother, a former police officer, goes in search for her. But what she encounters is a wall of academia bureaucracy and cover-ups that point to an abuse of authority stemming all the way to the government. Thriller, starring Ireland Baldwin, Victoria Pratt and Morgan Taylor Campbell. (2016)

Rogue, Friday, BBC1, 12.05am

THURSDAY
Boyfriend Killer, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A grieving mother goes through her dead son's social media accounts to salvage any photos and let his friends know of his death. But when she finds some messages between him and his vindictive girlfriend, she begins to suspect the young woman may have been involved in his death. Thriller, starring Barbie Castro, Patrick Muldoon and Kate Mansi. (2017)

FRIDAY
Rogue, BBC1, 12.05am
A captain taking a group of tourists on a trip through the Australian Outback is persuaded to travel into uncharted part of the river. The travellers then discover they have strayed into the territory of a ferocious crocodile and face a battle for survival. Thriller, starring Radha Mitchell. (2007)

Duo are caught up in a web of intrigue in new series

Typical – you wait months for a new six-part series from Jack and Harry Williams, the writers and creators of The Missing, and then two come along at once.

Yes, on the same evening that BBC1 launches Rellik (killer spelled backwards, in case you were wondering), ITV brings us Liar. At first glance, the Beeb's series bears more of the Williams' hallmarks – just as The Missing played out across different timelines, Rellik starts with capture of a serial killer, and then goes back to the beginning to explore what made them into a murderer.

However, Liar has a simpler idea, which was part of the plan. The Williams siblings say: "We were excited about exploring something with more dramatic simplicity - a linear story focusing on one single incident.

"In Liar we sought to explore modern day gender politics through a narrative built upon two fundamentally conflicting recollections of one night, in a way which we hope will challenge and surprise audiences."

If that wasn't intriguing enough, the series also boasts an impressive cast, including Downton Abbey's Joanne Froggatt and one-time Fantastic Four star Ioan Gruffudd, who was tempted back from Hollywood to tackle his role in Liar.

He says: "The reason I'm back home in the UK, and back on British television for the first time in a decade is Harry and Jack's script. I received their scripts in LA, the first three episodes, and sat down to read the first one and then proceeded to read all of them in one go. I just couldn't put them down."

He stars as Andrew Earlham, a widowed surgeon who is set up on a date with his colleague's sister Laura (Froggatt), who also happens to be Andrew's son's teacher. She's been reluctant to look for love following the end of her long-term relationship, but their date initially seems to go very well.

However, the morning after it's clear that something has changed as gossip and accusations begin to circulate, and the two find themselves drawn into a web of deceit.

Gruffudd says: "When Andrew is accused it offends him greatly, his status in the community is very important to him. He's a very proud of what he has achieved, and I think it shakes him to his core, he's angry, and he's shocked. I think one of the driving forces of his anger is the fact that how he is perceived by the world has changed, and I think that really makes him angry."

But is he right to feel aggrieved? It seems that getting to the truth is not going to be easy. Gruffudd says: "Every character in the show has secrets that are revealed at some point or another. We all hide things from one another, we all tell white lies, innocent lies, and sometimes those lies can be exaggerated and can have real consequences. So, not every person in the series is who they are cracked up to be…"

Ioan Gruffudd stars in Liar, Monday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Upstart Crow
BBC2, 8.30pm
New series. Will is desperate to make a good impression with the College of Heralds so he can get his family a coat of arms and finally make the Shakespeares posh. So when African royal Prince Otello comes to town, the aspiring playwright decides that befriending him is the perfect opportunity to make a favourable impression amongst the gentry. David Mitchell returns as William Shakespeare in Ben Elton's comedy, guest starring Steve Toussaint, with Harry Enfield, Paula Wilcox, Liza Tarbuck and Mark Heap.

TUESDAY
Horizon: Mars - A Traveller's Guide
BBC2, 9pm
The world's leading experts discuss where they would go on Mars, if they got the chance, and what they would need to survive on the planet. In the ultimate traveller's guide to Mars and using real images and data, Horizon brings Martian landmarks to life, from vast plains and towering volcanoes to deep valleys and hidden underground caverns, and also show where to land, where to live and even where to hunt for traces of extraterrestrial life. Narrated by Mark Gatiss.

WEDNESDAY
The Other One
BBC2, 10pm
A comedy about two sisters who share the same name, Catherine Walcott, but had no idea the other existed until their father passed away. One sister, Cathy, has a fiance, a Duke of Edinburgh Award, and a pension. The other sister, Cat, has a pay-as-you-go-phone. The two sisters are complete opposites in every way, and the only thing they seem to have in common are their names. Both of them have always longed for a sister – just maybe not each other. Starring Ellie White, Lauren Socha and Rebecca Front.

THURSDAY
No Limits:Vietnam
BBC1, 8pm
For the curious with long memories, this is not a revival of the old Lisa Maxwell/Jenny Powell entertainment series from 30-plus years ago. Instead, it centres on six Britons who embark on an ambitious road trip by modified motorbike and modified 4x4 along Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh Trail. A tricky enough trek for the able bodied, but as everyone on the journey is disabled, travelling almost 1,000 miles, through traffic-jammed cities to mountainous rural tracks pushes our ambitious travellers to breaking point. They will be staying with remote indigenous people; exploring stunning cave systems, and meeting locals - many of who live with disability courtesy of the Vietnam War. A refreshingly different traveloguen which should inspire millions.

Lego Masters
Channel 4, 8pm
The three remaining teams are challenged to create a build that reflects the inner workings of a child's storytelling imagination. They must each listen to a six-year old's story and then have three hours to bring their tales to life using Lego. The best two then take part in the final master build, for which they have two weeks to realise a structure measuring 2x2 metres and using up to half-a-million bricks. They will be unveiled to the public at the Design Museum in London, where comedian and Lego enthusiast Dara O Briain joins Matthew Ashton to choose the winner. Last in the series.

Comedy Playhouse: Static, Friday, BBC1, 10.35pm

FRIDAY
Cold Feet
ITV, 9pm
Baby-making miscommunication drives a wedge between Adam and Tina, while Karen's new business partner is concerned by the health of her accounts. Jenny inadvertently drops her colleagues in it when she tells her boss they could afford to lose a few employees. She will get to choose who makes the cut, but back home Pete is horrified by her behaviour and begins to wonder just what he has unleashed. Comedy drama, starring James Nesbitt, Leanne Best, Hermione Norris, John Thomson, Fay Ripley and Robert Bathurst.

Comedy Playhouse: Static
BBC1, 10.35pm
One-off sitcom about a man who makes plans to move back in with his parents – only to find they have sold the house and moved to a static caravan park in Margate. Co-written by and starring Rob Beckett, with Alison Steadman and Phil Davis.

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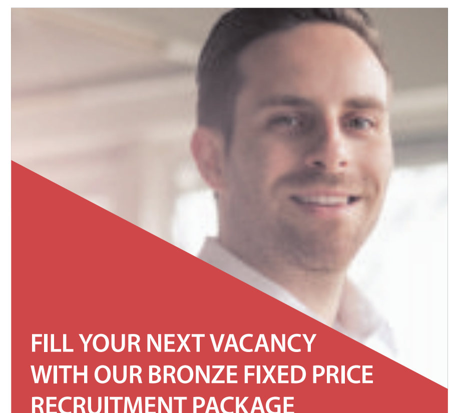

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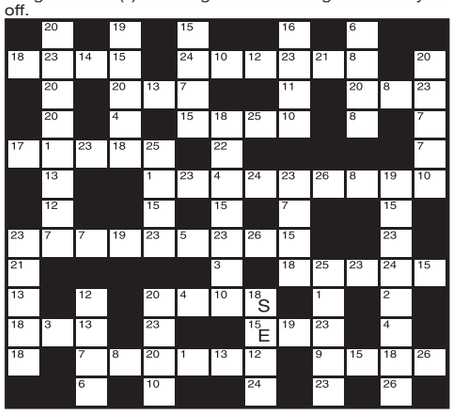
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



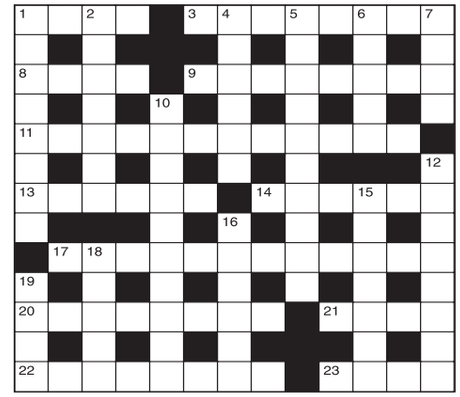
1	14
2	15 E
3	16
4	17
5	18 S
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
B	M	H	E	U	T	G	W	K	Q	Y	L	I
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
R	A	S	P	D	J	V	O	Z	C	X	N	F

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. A blow on the wrist, perhaps (4)
3. Cheers ironically when soldiers' quarters are seen (8)
8. Paper appearing again in the morning (4)
9. Crop made to be set beside others (8)
11. Bury part at the crossing (12)
13. A doctor with one foot loose (6)
14. Stagger on the street in a leisurely walk (6)
17. Study not permanent at the same time (12)
20. It's a disadvantage to lure a defender out (8)
21. Ancient Queen who achieved nothing (4)
22. Feeling that makes one hand on? (8)
23. Where the responsibility lies? (4)

Down

1. Church dignitary has vehicle to take Linda out (8)
2. Praise insincerely when some of the sparkle lost? (7)
4. Loves to read so (6)
5. Solicit again for a second occurrence (10)
6. The vehicle is to leave with freight (5)
7. The team has a pretentious air (4)
10. It's lucrative for those who are healthy and skilled (10)
12. Pleasure-loving youths in the theatre? (8)
15. Ivan, too, gets enthusiastic applause (7)
16. Hits fishing vessels (6)
18. Examinations in which results are poor also (5)
19. Poetry does, in a way (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Bucket (4)
3. Souvenir (8)
8. Plunder (4)
9. Stick out (8)
11. Teach thoroughly (12)
13. Very hot (6)
14. Smirk (6)
17. Good spirits (12)
20. Respite (8)
21. Equitable (4)
22. Uninhabited (8)
23. Otherwise (4)

Down

1. Mollify (8)
2. Fit for use (2,5)
4. Mistakes (6)
5. Impalpable (10)
6. Scepticism (5)
7. Smoke (4)
10. Fortuitous (10)
12. Keep (8)
15. Overcome (7)
16. Influence (6)
18. Obeys (5)
19. Retired (4)

Sudoku

		5						
	2		6		7		9	
		3	5		1	4		8
3			4		5			2
8							4	7
7			8	9	2			6
		1	3		4	6		
	4		7		6		8	3
			2					

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS:

2	5	9	7	6	1	8	4	3
7	8	4	5	3	2	9	6	1
1	3	6	4	8	9	7	2	5
4	9	5	2	1	6	3	8	7
8	1	2	3	9	7	6	5	4
3	6	7	8	5	4	1	9	2
6	4	8	1	2	3	5	7	9
9	2	3	6	7	5	4	1	8
5	7	1	9	4	8	2	3	6

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Masterpiece; 9 Trips up; 10 Awash; 11 Theta; 12 Sweater; 13 Poster; 15 Sparse; 18 Perches; 20 Aorta; 22 Rated; 23 Expound; 24 Threatening. Down: 2 Amine; 3 Testate; 4 Repose; 5 Image; 6 Chapter; 7 State papers; 8 Chargehands; 14 Scratch; 16 Playpen; 17 Ascent; 19 Hedge; 21 Rouen.
QUICK - Across: 1 Fashionable; 9 Riddled; 10 Outre; 11 Panic; 12 Teacher; 13 Neatly; 15 Status; 18 Unaware; 20 Put on; 22 Trend; 23 Diocese; 24 Predominate. Down: 2 Add on; 3 Helical; 4 Oddity; 5 Aroma; 6 Latchet; 7 Propinquity; 8 Represented; 14 Amateur; 16 Typhoon; 17 Seldom; 19 Aided; 21 Treat.

Quiz

1. Which actor married ex-Pan's People dancer Babs Lord in 1975?
2. To which family of fish does the bream belong?
3. In which year did China's elder statesman Deng Xiaoping die?
4. How many symphonies did Brahms write?
5. What is another name for common heather?
6. How many ares are there in a hectare?
7. Which Kirov Ballet star defected in 1970?
8. Which Royal residence was rebuilt by John Nash in 1821-36?
9. Which Verdi opera is based on the Dumas novel The Lady of the Camellias?
10. What was J Arthur Rank's first name?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 The Eucharist; 2 Fez; 3 One pound coin; 4 Saccharin; 5 Peter Cook; 6 Master of the King's Musick; 7 Brandy; 8 Bratislava; 9 Berkshire; 10 Heidi.

Niner: NURSEMAID

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

648496254 gives a creepy crawly,
377657 gives a second creepy crawly,
4961 gives creepy crawlies.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Finnish off with Moomin magic

TOSSED between clawing waves with only a wooden oar and magician's top hat, Moominpappa embarks on a whimsical journey to find a distant lighthouse.

It's 34 years since I read the story of a snouty patriarch who frolics with seahorses and befriends The Groke, a desperately lonely figure scarred with a permanent scowl, who turns ground to ice wherever she treads.

But I do recall a handwritten inscription in my copy of Moominpappa At Sea, promising the Moomins would take me on a special adventure one day.

Now I'm standing in front of a first edition illustrated book sleeve, part of a 2,000-strong collection of drawings, triptychs and related paraphernalia on rotated display at the world's only Moomin Museum, which recently opened in Tampere, a two-hour train ride north from Helsinki.

Visitors to the impressive Helsinki Cathedral

The Rauhaniemi public sauna in Tampere

PHENOMENON

Since Finnish artist, sculptor and illustrator Tove Jansson published her first book in 1945, the magical Moominvalley has become a worldwide cult phenomenon; children are drawn to the playful, fanciful characters, while the droll humour and philosophical allegories resonate with an older audience.

Tove's Moomin work was donated to the Tampere Art Museum in 1986, after Helsinki City Museum declined the collection on the basis it wasn't 'proper art'. A temporary exhibition of 100 pieces in the Tampere gallery's basement lasted for three decades, until structural damage resulted in an evacuation three years ago.

Moomin Museum Director Taina Myllyharju was given an 'almost unlimited' budget to employ the best architects, artists and designers in her quest for creating a new space in the park-fringed Tampere Hall.

A reading library stocks the 12 Moomin books in multiple languages, and a shop sells themed postcards and stamps (conveniently, there's a postbox on site) and exclusive merchandise given the seal of approval by Tove's niece, Sophia Jansson.

"We even have the world's only Moomin conservator," Taina proudly proclaims.

Restoring the works, particularly the detailed triptychs Tove worked on with her life partner, graphic artist Tuulikki Pietila, was a painstaking business. Often, the women would use anything they could find lying around in the summer cottage they shared on remote island Klovharu. These colourful 3D scenes were ephemeral snatches of imagination; they weren't designed to last.

Crossing a wasteland on spindly, insect-leg stilts, Moomintroll and Sniff stare up at a cobweb-shrouded model schooner. The Jansson family heirloom forms the centrepiece of a tableau from the apocalyptic Comet in Moominland, which critics have linked to post-war gloom and the looming spectre of nuclear attacks.

And in another carefully crafted model, pieces of Pietila's and Tove's own jewellery festoon a winter scene where Christmas is a fearful creature who must be appeased with a fir tree.

I get the impression that with every seashell collected and each piece of Styrofoam painted and glued, the two artists climbed further into their fantasy world and the act of doing became a form of escapism.

Under the cover of darkness, I comfortably sink into the Moomin's make-believe world, with the help of several interactive displays

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PROPERTY

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Extended period detached in a sought-after road

An exceptional extended period detached residence in a highly sought-after road, 9 New Road, Willenhall, is for sale through Skitts at offers over £300,000.

In brief its accommodation comprises of a guests cloakroom/WC, two superb reception rooms, an extended kitchen, an impressive breakfast room/conservatory, three excellent size bedrooms, an en-suite shower room, a large family bathroom, a block paved driveway, delightful well established landscaped gardens, gas central heating and double glazing.

Outside is a block paved driveway, a carport and a lawned front garden and a delightful well established and private rear garden. In more detail the entrance hall has stairs leading to the first floor. Reception room one has an Adam-style fire surround with a gas fire and a bay window to the front. Reception room two has a French door opening out to the rear.

Having a range of wall and base cupboard units with work surfaces, the kitchen comes with an electric oven and hob and tiled flooring.

The breakfast room/conservatory has a door to the rear and tiled flooring.

On the first floor, bedroom one has a range of wardrobes and cupboards, a dressing area and an en-suite. Bedroom two has a built-in wardrobe and there is a third bedroom.

The bathroom has a suite including a corner bath, low flush WC and pedestal wash hand basin.

The rear garden is laid mainly to lawn with well established shrub borders and a paved patio area.

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BILSTON

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ESSINGTON
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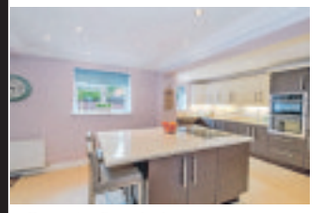

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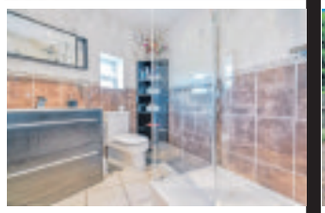

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- Potential For Extension STPP
- Willenhall / Essington Boarder
- EPC - F

O.I.E.O £300,000

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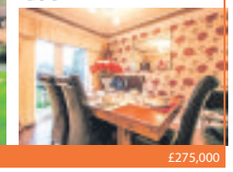

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The Chronicle Thursday, September 7, 2017

Hello to the new Skoda Octavia vRS

By Mal Hay

Say hello to the stupendously SHOUTY Skoda Octavia vRS.

Everything about this car is loud and absolutely nothing about it is subtle.

With a two-litre turbo diesel engine pumping out a lively 181bhp this is a car that's all about performance and it wants everyone to know it.

From the colour – Rallye Green metallic (imagine the lovechild of Kermit the Frog and Grotbags) – to the 18" rims and the throaty high-decibel growl when you push the accelerator, the whole world can see and hear this car coming.

Skeptical

But, when all's said and done, it's both a Skoda and an estate, so it's going to have to work doubly hard to win over this skeptical driver.

I'll lay my cards on the table up front and declare that the Octavia vRS is one I'd normally avoid like the plague.

Yet my first impressions, looking beyond the colour, were overwhelmingly positive.

Replace the hideous green with virtually any other colour and the Octavia estate is a good looking car and Skoda's designers have done a great job of giving the vRS a sporty edge without resorting to the addition of giant spoilers and unsightly steroid induced bulges.

The large wheels with low profile tyres, the dual chrome exhausts and black exterior details all combine to give what would otherwise be an average-looking estate a real presence.

Inside, the vRS badged sports seats and 'Supersports' steering wheel add to the performance feel but the cabin's all-black finish feels a little dull and uninspiring at first, although things do come alive once the model's large excellent Columbus touchscreen infotainment screen powers on.

There is a large excellent Columbus touchscreen

The test car's green colour is not the best

With a two-litre turbo diesel engine pumping out a lively 181bhp this is a car that's all about performance

A quick play with the controls and a glance down the spec' sheet of our model underlines one great selling point – value for money. Our Octavia vRS is packed with tech, safety features and little luxuries like headlamp washers but still retails at £35,805 on-the-road.

For that price, there are few models that can touch the Octavia vRS in terms of bang per buck.

Some of the switchgear feels a little lightweight but this can be forgiven as it's clearly intended to shave pounds to boost performance. And let's face it, that is the main reason for choosing the vRS over a standard Octavia estate.

For me though, the performance seems somewhat lacking and underwhelming. The engine does make a lovely noise when revved, but the model doesn't quite pull away with the face-melting ferocity one might expect and at higher speeds it can feel as though the vRS doesn't have much more to give.

At times, the six-speed DSG gearbox also feels less sharp and responsive than it should.

Despite that though, I'm looking forward to spending the next few months with the Skoda. It's already done enough to show how potentially fun it can be, and I'm sure than more time spent fine-tuning the driving settings will deliver the added oomph that's so far been missing.

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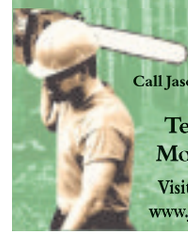

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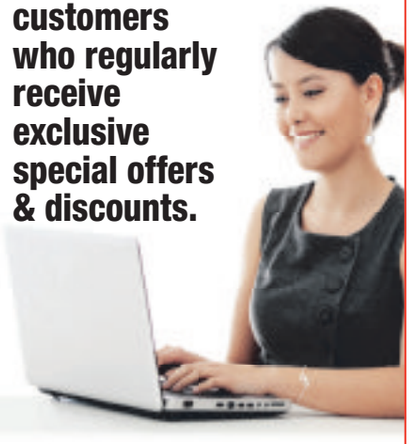

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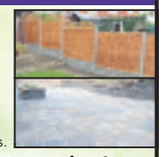

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guns & dogs

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5 Business & Farming

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9 Local Information

public & legal notices

Licensing Act 2003

Notice of Application to Vary a Club Premises Certificate

An application to vary a club premises certificate has been made by Harrisons Recreation Ground and Welfare Institute to South Staffordshire District Council in respect of premises known as Harrisons Sports and Social Club, Wharwell Lane, Great Wyrley, Staffordshire, WS6 6EU.

The application is as follows;

1. To enable the supply of alcohol to or on behalf of a member or bona fide guest for consumption on and off the premises, as per the club rules, every day of the year, Monday to Sunday 0900-0030 hours. To be extended by 1 hour New Year's Eve / New Year's Day.

2. Plays, Films, Indoor Sporting Events, Live music, recorded music, or anything of a similar description, performance of dance every day of the year, Monday to Sunday 0900-0030 hours. To be extended by 1 hour New Year's Eve / New Year's Day

3. Premises open to the public every day of the year, Monday to Sunday 0900-0100 hours. To be extended by 1 hour New Year's Eve / New Year's Day.

Any representation by responsible authorities or any other person regarding the application must be made in writing to The Licensing Officer, South Staffordshire District Council, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, Staffordshire WV8 1PX by midnight 21st Septemeber 2017.

Persons wishing to view the application may do so by contacting the licensing unit on 01902 696250 email; licensing@sstaffs.gov.uk

It is an offence liable on summary conviction of a fine up to level 5 (5,000) on the standard scale to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with the application.

Dated; 24th August 2017

JOYCE MARIAN HORTON
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The two teams line up ahead of the charity football match, Phoenix in red and the Midland Ace Legends in blue

Chris Marsh, Chris Nicholl, Wayne Thomas and Ray Graydon

Former footballers Tony Daley, Chris Marsh and Peter Bodak

Ex-Albion, Wolves and Walsall striker Don Goodman in action

Phoenix rise to occasion against old favourites

SPORTING FEATURE

By Joseph Masi

A HOST of football favourites rolled back the years in an exhibition match to raise money for grassroots football.

Stars including Don Goodman, Martin O'Connor, Tony Daley, Lee Naylor and James Chambers were all in attendance as a Midland Ace Legends side played out a 3-2 thriller with Walsall Phoenix Veterans.

The event was held to raise funds for Phoenix, who ply their trade in the Staffordshire County Senior League Premier Division.

In glorious sunshine at Aldridge Cricket Club, more than 1,500 people packed in to watch the game and enjoy a host of other attractions including live music, food stalls, bouncy castles, inflatable games and a licensed bar. There was also a 20-team football tournament with junior sides from across the region.

Walsall heroes Ray Graydon and Chris Nicholl took charge of the Midlands Ace Legends' side.

Delighted

But the managerial greats couldn't add another win to their glittering CVs – with Phoenix running out victors.

Their boss, Tom Revitt, admitted he was delighted with how the day went.

"It was absolutely great for our lads to play against some big names," he said.

"To share a pitch with someone like Don Goodman is great for people, like me, who have always enjoyed playing lower league football.

"We had a great turnout, more than 1,500. And what was nice is that football was only half the day. We had live bands, plenty of entertainment for children and a junior football tournament as well.

"It took a lot of work but it's crucial we hold events like this.

"As a club we have got 25 teams now and the cost to run them last year was £60,000.

"We don't have the opportunity to bring in big money through sponsorship – although some of the local businesses do help.

"This event will prove a huge benefit for us in terms of raising money to keep paying those running costs. We hope it will be the first of many."

The Midlands Ace Legends side had been put together by former Walsall midfielder Wayne Thomas. He is now hoping to hold more fundraising matches with other grassroots sides, as well as charities, across the region.

"We put together the Midlands Ace Legends because at charity days or fundraisers there is an appeal to have players who have played for different clubs across the region," Thomas said.

"Chris Marsh is a very good friend of mine and has a lot of contacts.

"We put this side together so when people ask about fundraising days we can cater for all football fans in the West Midlands.

"We had a lovely day, a great turnout and hopefully we'll be able to support other clubs and charities in the future." Arguably the biggest draw on the day was former Saddlers boss Graydon, who twice won promotion during his time in charge at the Banks's Stadium.

The former Villa winger also netted the winning goal in the 1975 League Cup final.

And the 70-year-old, who now lives in Hampshire, admitted he thoroughly enjoyed being back in the Midlands.

"It was fantastic for me to be back around supporters of Walsall," he said. "I absolutely loved it. I wanted to come back because I think events like this are so important.

"It costs an awful lot of money to run a football club, just to keeping going, so I'm very happy to help."

Spectator Maurice Walsh, from Bloxwich, said everyone enjoyed the day.

"I really enjoyed it and it was great to get autographs from the ex-pros," he said.

"I think having a Midlands Ace Legends side is a very good way to raise money for grassroots football."

Kenny Mower and Wayne Thomas

Action from the fundraising clash in Aldridge

Sparring partners go head-to-head in ring

MANNY ZABER and Jack Summers will renew acquaintances after the draw for Black Country Boxing's Super Series: The Super Featherwights was made.

Eight Midlands boxers will compete over three nights to be crowned the Midlands Area Super Featherweight Champion. Quarter-finals take place at Walsall Town Hall on Sunday, October 15, over six three-minute rounds.

Old Hill's Zaber and West Bromwich's Summers are both managed by BCB head of boxing, Errol Johnson, and have shared the ring countless times as sparring partners. Zaber boasts a superior record but Summers is a tough competitor who will be looking to cause an upset.

Chasetown's Luke Jones steps in with Leicester's Joe Ducker.

There's a Second City derby as Birmingham's Paul Holt meets fellow Brummie Waqas Mohammed, while former stablemates and fellow Tamworth residents Louis Fielding and Tamworth's Josh Baillie go head-to-head.

Players on oche for more Grand Slams

THERE will be, at least, another two Grand Slam of Darts at Wolverhampton Civic Hall after the PDC released their tournament calendar for 2018.

The competition will see its 10th anniversary at the Civic in the usual month of November and will also return next year.

Holder Michael Van Gerwen will be back for this year's Slam, from November 11-19. Six-time winner, 57-year-old Phil Taylor, will be featuring for the last time.

New sponsors have come on board to back the next two Grand Slams, Austrian-based betting company Bwin replacing Thai brewers Singha Beer.

Tipton's Jamie Hughes is on course to be the Black Country presence, due to his world ranking of No.3 with rival organisation the BDO. One player from the BDO will feature in each of the eight groups with those certain of their places being Glen Durrant and Danny Noppert, plus the Grand Slam debut of Peter Machin, 2017 World trophy winner.

The 2018 Grand Slam has been booked at the Civic for November 10-18.

£1m ex-Wolves star gives talk for hospice

BRITAIN'S first £1m player, former Wolves player Steve Daley, will be giving a talk this month to raise money for a hospice.

The Sportsman's Supper, with fish and chips, takes place on September 22 from 6.30pm, at Stafford Rangers Football Club, Marston Road, on the Astonfields Industrial Estate. It has been organised by Katharine House Hospice in Stafford.

Guests will be able to enjoy dinner while the former footballer talks about his life and career journey which started when he was 15 years old.

Daley joined Wolves as an apprentice and signed as a professional in 1971, making his debut as a substitute in a 4-2 win over Nottingham Forest in September that year. He played more than 200 times for Wolves before moving to Manchester City for a then British record transfer fee of £1.4m in 1979. Two years later he crossed the Atlantic to play in America,

Tickets for the night can be bought for £15 per person at https://www.khhospice.org.uk/product/kick-katharine-evening-event

Sport

Phoenix rise to occasion against old favourites

Page 35

Sixth victory keeps Wood on right track

Walsall Wood 4 Littleton 1

WIN six out of six in the league for Wood. It was a bright opening by both sides with Wood probably just shading the first 15 minutes.

Then on 16 minutes Paul Sullivan waltzed into the left of the box, his low drive bouncing off the foot of the left hand post, Andrew Westwood pouncing onto the loose ball to fire into the roof of the net. Within a minute it was two, that man Sullivan again running at the defence only to be fouled just left of the D, up stepped Joey Butlin to fire a peach of a free kick into the top left hand corner. Right on the break Butlin chased a ball into the right hand corner, beat two defenders, crossed low into the centre to find Sullivan who calmly sidestepped his marker and played the ball into the net past the stranded McArthy.

On 60 minutes having had a rest Sullivan raced into the left of the box, cut back inside to fire a low drive just wide.

On 75 minutes substitute Lewis Taylor Boyce hit a lovely crossfield ball to pick out Till wide left, he cut inside to hit a rising drive narrowly over. Five minutes later Till crossed from wide left to the far post, Sullivan controlling the ball before sliding home number four.

A minute later with Wood still celebrating a long ball forward saw Carter race into the right of the box only to go down under a clumsy challenge - penalty, that Carter took himself to make it 4-1.

Saturday's FA Vase fixture at Division 2 Barnt Green Spartak who play at Highgate's ground.

Darlaston hope to maintain unbeaten record with return

AFTER a two week absence West Midlands League Division One side Darlaston Town (1874) FC return to league action on Saturday, at the Paycare Ground, against Worcester Raiders.

Darlaston are unbeaten in their opening four league games whilst Raiders have just one loss so a tough encounter is in store.

Despite the absence of fixtures Manager Andy Parkes has been busy in the transfer market with two incomings and one outgoing at The Paycare Ground based club.

Parkes was delighted when he secured the signature of former Hinckley and Chasetown forward Tyrone Clarke O'Connell. O'Connell who played for Parkes as a youth has been absent from Saturday football for two years due to works commitments. Parkes said: "Tyrone is an excellent signing for the club. He is exceptionally quick and has played at a very high level."

Also joining the club is midfielder James Filkins. Filkins, also Darlaston based has joined from Premier Division Black Country Rangers.

Subs combine to edge Pics through

Zak Lilly just can't connect. Picture: Steve Walker

RUSHALL OLYMPIC 1 POTTON UTD 0

A GOAL six minutes from time by substitute Stan Mugisha settled this scrappy tie in favour of the home side, but they were pushed all the way by the visitors.

Chances were few and far between but on 21 minutes a Kristian Scott through-ball almost found Zak Lilly, but goalkeeper Will Cook saw him clear the danger. Most of the home side's threats came from Scott's set pieces and Joe Hull got on the end of another fine cross, but headed straight at Cook. At the other end, a mix-up in the defence saw Dan Crane's attempted clearance charged down by Webb before being cleared. The home side almost took the lead early in the second half when Dominic Dell forced a fine save from Cook and Andre Lavell saw his shot bounce off the top of the bar.

An early second-half double substitution for the home side saw Liam Lawrence and Stan Mugisha introduced into the action and six minutes from time they carved out the winning goal.

A superb through-ball from Lawrence picked out Mugisha, who calmly fired past Cook to give the home side the lead.

AGYEI SCORES ON HIS DEBUT

STRIKING sensation Daniel Agyei has revealed he was on the brink of joining another club before Walsall swooped for him on deadline day.

The striker, who has moved to the Banks's Stadium on loan from Burnley, netted a debut goal on Saturday as the Saddlers secured a 2-1 victory over Plymouth.

Agyei powered home a header from a Luke Leahy cross less than 48 hours after joining the club on deadline day.

And he revealed it was a last-gasp phone call from Jon Whitney that convinced him to become a Saddler.

"The move was a last minute thing," he said. "I was going to sign for another club. Walsall came in at the 11th hour and I decided to come here.

"I spoke to the gaffer on the phone and he really convinced me. He made me feel like coming to Walsall was the right move for me.

Convincing

"So far I have really enjoyed it. To get a debut goal and get up and running was great."

On Saturday, Jon Whitney's side – now packed with attacking talent – put on its most convincing display of the season so far to comfortably sweep aside Plymouth.

The 2017/18 campaign may still be in its infancy, but Walsall have now shown plenty of signs that this could be a year to savour.

An outstanding second half against Oldham was followed by a resolute defensive showing at Portsmouth.

And on another day, the Saddlers display against Bradford would have earned them all three points, instead of the one they had to make do with. But in this clash, against Derek Adams' Green Army, Whitney's new-look team put on its most emphatic performance yet.

And it was done with a slight tweak to the formation with Erhun Oztumer lining up behind Ama Bakayoko and Dan Agyei in a 3-4-1-2 system. It was a bold call by the manager.

Erhun Oztumer crashes home the vital second goal, which turned out to be the Saddlers' winner

Right from the off, Plymouth found it impossible to contain the Saddlers. And at the heart of it all was debut boy Agyei.

First he connected with a Bakayoko cross, only to see his header saved. Then the forward latched on to a low Nicky Devlin delivery – with his strike taking a deflection before sailing inches past the post.So it was no surprise when Agyei did put the Saddlers ahead midway through the half.

When Oztumer put the Saddlers 2-0 up with a stunning strike from 20 yards, the game seemed as good as over.

Yet there was drama still to come. An awful refereeing decision saw Leahy penalised for pushing Nathan Blissett in the box. Graham Carey duly converted even though Plymouth's players hadn't appealed for a spot-kick.

Records of Slade's are hit for six

FORMER West Bromwich Dartmouth cricketer Doug Slade has had his named wiped from the Birmingham League record books twice in one day.

Slade previously held the records for most aggregate runs in a season (1,407) and most centuries in a season (seven) – both in 1978.

But Kiwi George Worker struck 145 for Knowle & Dorridge against Walsall on Saturday to surpass both of those feats – taking him to 1,445 runs and eight centuries. That result kept Walsall in trouble, despite remarkable figures of 8-55 for bowler Luke Stynes.

Pelsall remain on track for the Staffs Clubs Premier Division thanks to an 81-run win over Swindon.

Elsewhere, Aldridge were beaten by 68 runs by Cannock. Will Fleet (73) and Nick Trebilcock (43) helped Cannock to 212-6, Matt Robinson then claimed 7-40 as Aldridge were bowled out for 144.

Walsall YPF went down by two wickets to Whittington. Jono Allcock and Matt Stone took three wickets apiece to help dismiss YPF for 138 and 36 runs each for Alex Arnold and Rick Ashworth saw Whittington home.

Zain Shahid and Shahzab Raja both scored 107 as Highcroft & Great Barr totalled 287-3 in a draw with Beacon seconds (175-7). Asif Ali claimed 4-19.

Bloxwich bowler Connor Pitt destroyed Wightwick & Finchfield. Chasing the Bloxwich total of 168, Pitt returned 6-23 as the visitors were skittled for just 43.

Triathlete Reece is first home at just 17

BLACK Country Triathletes hosted their second annual Sprint Triathlon at Ounsdale Leisure Centre in Wombourne which included a 400m swim, a 20km bike & a 5km run. The overall male winner was Reece Ashfield, aged 17, in 55:36. Lee Moreton was 2nd, in 57:14. Lauren Evans picked up 2nd overall female in a time of 1:03:51.

Further afield in Zofingen, Rob Kennard took part in the ITU World Long Distance Duathlon Championships: a 10km run followed by a 150km bike and a further 30km run set in the Alps. Kennard finished in 8:43:25 placing him 82 overall and 8th in his age group.

★★★

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Thursday, September 7, 2017

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